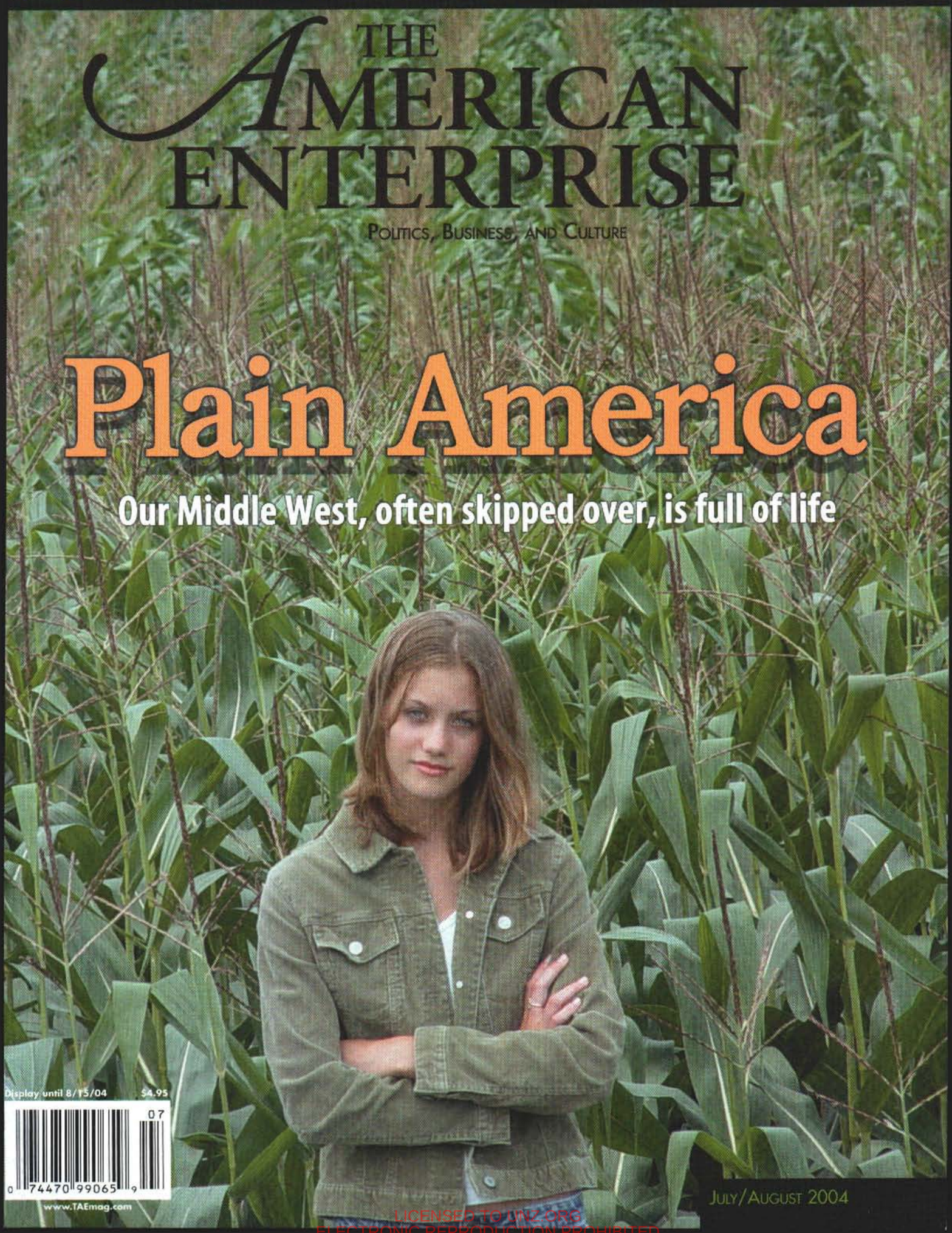
SAM HUNTINGTON: ARE WE A NATION "UNDER GOD"? GOV. BILL OWENS JAMES LILEKS

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

Plain America

Our Middle West, often skipped over, is full of life



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JULY/AUGUST 2004

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IF IT'S IMPORTANT, IT'S ON . . .

Think TANK

With BEN WATTENBERG

"Islam at the Crossroads"

"*Islam at the Crossroads* was a wonderful program that I wish everyone could see. Dr. Akbar Ahmed provided a very well-balanced and seemingly very honest perspective that needs to be heard more often and in more places.

I want to thank you for the very informative interview with Mr. Ahmed. I have never heard anyone speak like he did, so convincingly and so intelligently on Islam and also the underlying cause of the unrest in the world.

I feel his interview did more to allow further, much needed understanding of Islam than anything I have heard since 9/11.

I don't believe there are any Islamic "moderates" and your Islamic guest was just pushing Islamic propaganda. Let Islam prove its moderation by helping us destroy the Osama-Saddam murderers.

I watch a lot of PBS and I am amazed to note that whenever they speak about religions of the world, the word "Hindu" is seldom mentioned. When great democracies are discussed the world's greatest democracy [India] is not mentioned. Please try to include programs based on Hinduism and India.

This morning I learned several things about Muslims that were previously unknown to me. This kind of interview really belongs on prime time programming so that it is widely seen and contemplated with the religious tolerance that will hopefully follow.

I applaud your show with Dr. Akbar Ahmed and a sensible discussion of Islam and the disturbing trend of fundamentalism. I was particular intrigued by his comment that Islam does not need a reformation but instead is in need of a Renaissance. As a Muslim-American, I could not agree more.

I'm grateful for your bringing this thoughtful, essentially hopeful message to us."

PBS

THINK TANK: THE PBS PROGRAM ON IDEAS

Pfizer

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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE
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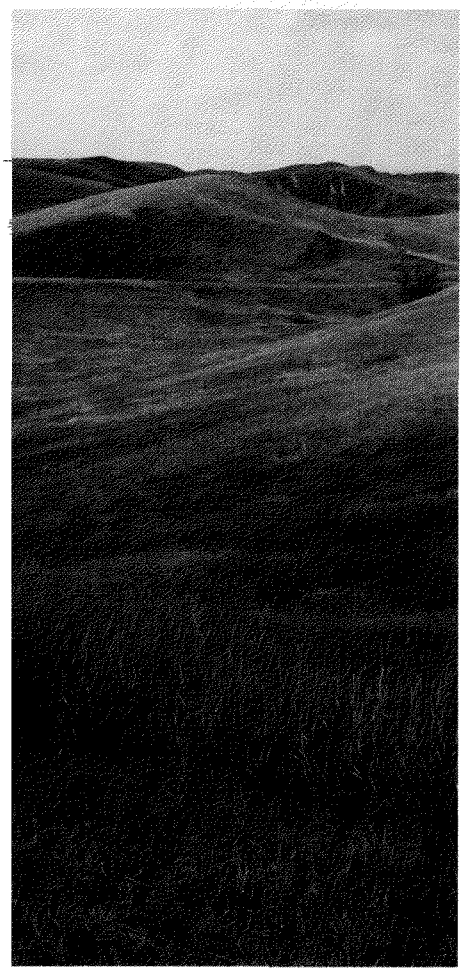

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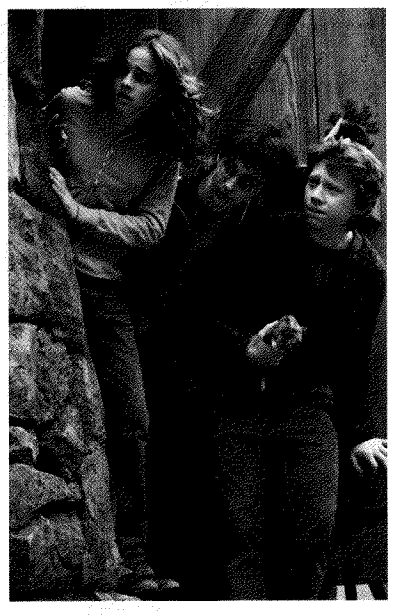

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POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

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Bird's Eye

The Stamp Of Our Wild West

By Karl Zinsmeister

It was almost exactly 200 years ago: Three dozen men, tough as mule meat, departed the last outpost of civilization on an American odyssey that would take them more than 8,000 miles by foot, canoe paddle, and hoof. Before they finally returned to St. Charles, Missouri an amazing 864 days later, nearly everyone except the man who sent them assumed they had long since perished on their journey.

The man who never lost hope was Thomas Jefferson—the Commander in Chief who more than doubled the size of the United States by purchasing "Upper Louisiana" from France in 1803, then dispatched an American military party (under the command of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark) to learn what the nation had bought. The vast tract stretching from New Orleans to the Montana-Canada border was an uncharted wilderness, full of threats and opportunities. Crossing it for the first time was equivalent to sending men to the moon; the expedition cost $40,000—which as a proportion of federal spending would be more than $11 billion now—and it lasted four times longer than Columbus's voyage to the New World. These surveyors of the Louisiana Purchase were quite conscious of the Columbian scope of their enterprise; one of the first toasts upon their return was to the memory of the Italian mariner.

When their work was complete, the glimmering outlines of a great new nation could be seen. What Captains Lewis and Clark and their soldiers traversed—what we now call the Middle West—was the far, *far* west in the minds of Americans of that day. And the sojourners didn't turn back until they had camped on the Pacific Ocean, the final, natural limit on their countrymen's continental aspirations.

These trekkers probed a land of vast scope and harsh dangers. They encountered predators of unspeakable ferocity, Indians both hostile and friendly, and wrenching sicknesses that literally knocked them off their feet. During their first winter the adventurers bore temperatures of 45 degrees below zero. The mighty Missouri River actually froze solid. Many times these men staggered weak-kneed with hunger, their ribs protruding as they barely survived on roots, wolf meat, berries, and the flesh of their own horses.

While (amazingly) only one explorer died during their three years of wandering, in subsequent adventures seven members of the party were killed by Indians, and numerous others succumbed to additional hazards of the territory. (A new book called *The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers After the Expedition* provides some fascinating details.) John Ordway, Lewis and Clark's invaluable sergeant, saw all the land he received as bounty for his service destroyed in unimaginable ways by the ferocious earthquake that tore the Midwest in 1811. The year 1816 became known in the Louisiana Purchase as "the year without a summer," as snow and frost descended repeatedly during June, July, and August.

But none of this discouraged American settlers from pouring into the new region. For Lewis and Clark had uncovered a land of mythic proportions that immediately took on a giant significance in the national mind. The "West" they opened up became a blank slate on which generations of striving Americans sought to write their name. In the process, this land shaped our national character in ways that still continue to be important.

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Today, 200 years after Lewis and Clark entered it as a wild fringe, the Middle West is more like America's moral center. It is a land of intact families, strong faith, and close-knit communities (as several articles in this issue document). Americans are moving there to establish homes and businesses. Thanks largely to healthy childrearing the U.S. heartland is also (according to standardized tests) our brain belt. In these ways, the Midwest acts as a kind of safety harness, securing our nation from the center against the worst modern social traumas.

The Lewis and Clark expedition was very much a military mission. The company was made up of two officers, three sergeants, and 23 privates between the ages of 18 and 34. Nearly all were unmarried. These men were hand picked for their skill as soldiers, boatmen, marksmen, hunters, gunsmiths, and scouts. Most were originally from rural Virginia, Pennsylvania, or New England, and many had migrated to Kentucky when that was our nation's far western frontier. All were hardened outdoorsmen.

In recent months I've described to many audiences the reconstructive, political, and economic work I have observed present-day U.S. soldiers carrying out in Iraq. Several people have told me that those seem inappropriate tasks for soldiers. One *TAE* subscriber wrote to insist that the only legitimate assignment for a military unit was to "rain down fire upon our enemies."

The soldiers under Lewis and Clark, however, were charged with much more than just military duties. They did indeed plant the flag, announce American suzerainty, and rain down fire on a few occasions, and they operated under full military discipline throughout, including courts martial, honors for the dead, and so forth. But the U.S. soldiers deployed in Louisiana from 1804 to 1806 also did many other things.

Jefferson, in his initial description of the type of officer he was seeking to lead the expedition, said he wanted a man with "the necessary firmness of body and mind, habits of living in the woods, and familiarity with the Indian character," but also one "perfectly skilled in botany, natural history, mineralogy, astronomy." When he settled on Captain Lewis, the first thing he did was send him to Philadelphia to study with some of the leading scientists in our young nation.

In equipping the corps, the first priority of the co-commanders was their guns—a variety of arms, ammunition, flints, ramrods, and powder canisters were purchased, packed, and carefully maintained and stewarded over three years of use. But their very next priority was scientific equipment—sextants, weather instruments, compasses, chronometers—used to make observations, create maps, and collect information and specimens from nature. When canoes overturned or goods had to be abandoned, saving and protecting the scientific gear was always a matter of frantic importance to the men.

These soldiers collected, catalogued, and painstakingly shipped back to Washington many hundreds of scientific artifacts—bighorn sheep skeletons, live prairie dogs, dried plants, Indian ritual items, rock samples. And the items corps members prized most of all were their expedition journals—nearly one million hand-lettered words describing events, weather, flora and fauna, and natural wonders, with nearly every man keeping his own account—along with the masterful maps created by William Clark. These hardy armed warriors took the time to discover and describe 178 plant species and 122 animals previously unknown to science, and compiled one of the most impressive records of natural history ever assembled.

They not only acted as scientific investigators, but also as diplomats and promoters of trade. They made direct contact with at least 15 different Indian tribes, introducing many of them to white men for the very first time. They assembled detailed records of Indian language and culture. The travellers explained why they had come, pleaded for peace, and promised mutually beneficial commerce. All Indians were treated with respect, and some chiefs were subsequently escorted as far as Washington, D.C. to meet with our country's elected representatives. William Clark spent the rest of his life serving as a friend and advocate for Native Americans.

This military company was driven not by ego, or a lust for riches, or demands for national glory, but mostly by a hunger for knowledge of new places and people and creations of nature. It was primarily an intellectual quest, carried out against supreme physical demands, a benign and public-spirited exploratory venture that benefited humanity as a whole. It succeeded only because the voyagers combined the high impulses of intellectual curiosity with the strength of bottomless courage. In this, the American soldiers who took part were early precursors for others who have been asked in many times and many places since to carry out vital work that extended far beyond their main expertise of warfighting.

The settling of the Louisiana Purchase cemented many deeply American qualities into our national character. One of these traits was the insistence that every man is as good as the next. In the American West, there were no masters and peons, partly because on our dangerous frontiers all residents had to be armed, and many people carried their weapon with them at all times. The rifle, and later revolver, were great equalizers of men, and potent encouragements to civility and egalitarianism in all public dealings.

Western life also encouraged the acceptance of individuals for cooperative reasons. On a sparsely populated frontier, one additional shooter, or nurse, or laborer could make the difference between success and failure, life and death. There were many niches where people could show their worth. When Lewis and Clark turned west, their party included a skilled hunter and interpreter who was half Shawnee. Two other men were half Omaha

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Indian. One black man made the journey. And a French-Canadian close to 40 years old was engaged as a translator, along with his teenage Shoshone wife and their two-month-old baby.

One of the expedition's historic moments came on November 24, 1805, when the corps voted on where to spend the winter before returning home. Both the teen Indian squaw Sacagawea and York, William Clark's black slave, were allowed to vote. This vote was administered easily, without ostentation, generations before laws engineered back in Washington, D.C. would recognize blacks, women, or Indians as electors.

Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, the child of the French-Canadian mountain man and Indian mother, who passed his infancy and toddling years in the mountains and prairies with the corps, was eventually adopted by William Clark himself. "Pomp," as the boy was nicknamed by Captain Clark, became a perfect symbol of the new Western American. After his wild boyhood he was schooled, then travelled to Europe—where he mastered several languages and impressed people with his manners and reading. After a few years, though, he left the cities of Germany and returned to the American West, where he became a prominent wilderness guide, participated in the Mexican-American War, and ended life as a California pioneer. He was described in his obituary as "pleasant…intelligent, well read in the topics of the day, and generally esteemed in the community in which he lived…a good-meaning man."

When one of the Indian chiefs whom Lewis and Clark befriended was brought to Washington, D.C. to meet the President, he was toasted with these words: "To the Red People of America... gaining by steady steps the comforts of the civilized, without losing the virtues of the savage state." That formulation expresses in a nutshell what many Americans have aspired to across the history of our country: to grasp the benefits of modernity and civilization, but always "without losing the virtues of the savage state."

Americans prize breadth of mind, and seek a progressive refinement of life. Ralph Waldo Emerson noted how quickly pianos found their way into log cabins along our frontier. Our desire for self-improvement, material gain, and intellectual advance can also be seen in our powerful, longstanding enthusiasm for business expansion, scientific progress, and economic growth.

But we Americans emphatically do not want to be civilized to the point of becoming domesticated and sissified. That is an important theme visible in our literature and popular culture. From Melville, Twain, and Jack London to John Wayne and Clint Eastwood, we have shown that we want our men and women to keep their raw authenticity and retain some of their sharp edges. A certain wild hardness of character, we believe, leaves us better prepared to battle life's hostile elements, win necessary competitions, and prevail against dangerous enemies—even vicious storm troopers or *kamikazes* or *mujahideen* who terrify less rugged people.

America's high mix of civilized wisdoms and wilderness virtues was well encapsulated in the event staged by the social elite of St. Louis on September 26, 1806 to celebrate the Corps of Discovery's historic return:

> The men made their way through the muddy streets of St. Louis, that civilized, uncouth, eastern, western city, outpost of narrow, crowded streets overrun with merchants, miners, hunters, trappers, gamblers, army officers, priests, bonneted women, and painted French girls.

(Compare the above to the marvelous sketch of contemporary Hyder, Alaska that begins on page 22 of this issue and you will see that even in a time of paved roads and SUVs with heated seats, America's frontier energy still survives.)

In the midst of that bubbling, bustling, half-barbarian boomtown of St. Louis, a formal dinner and ball were thrown for Lewis and Clark and their men. The evening began with 17 toasts. "To the President of the United States." "To the federal Constitution." "To commerce." "To agriculture and industry," added someone. "To the fair daughters of Louisiana!" grinned one gentleman.

Then came the salutations of a somewhat wilder, and fiercer, tinge. "To the Missouri River." "To the Louisiana Territory." "To the memory of the illustrious Washington, Father of America. [He had died just seven years earlier.] May his guardian spirit still watch over us and prove a terror to the engines of tyranny." "To peace with all nations—without submission!" And "To our fathers who shed their blood and laid down their lives to purchase our independence."

For generations, it was the harsh demands of life on our Western fringe that prevented Americans from being seduced by comfort, that kept alive our respect for the savage virtues. It was experience in frontier communities—first rural towns across the Atlantic seaboard, then cabins strung along trails through the Appalachians, then farms carved into the emptiness of the Great Plains, and finally homesteads in and over the Rocky Mountains, that honed our appreciation for the untamed man.

But right from the beginning, the West was a state of mind for Americans as much as a physical place. The majority of our people never actually experienced Western life, but they lived it nonetheless—through books, paintings, journals, travelling shows, songs, photographs and movies. The Western identity became wholly intermixed with the American identity.

A taste for the wild seeped right into our bones. We must hope it will remain there, a permanent part of Americanism. If so, that will separate us eternally from our European cousins and the many kept and captive nations of history. And that will also forever link all American citizens to the Middle Westerners of Oklahoma, Nebraska, the Dakotas—people who stamped onto the minds of their fellow countrymen the indelible image of an unbroken plain of wild grass, stretching right to the horizon, and beyond.

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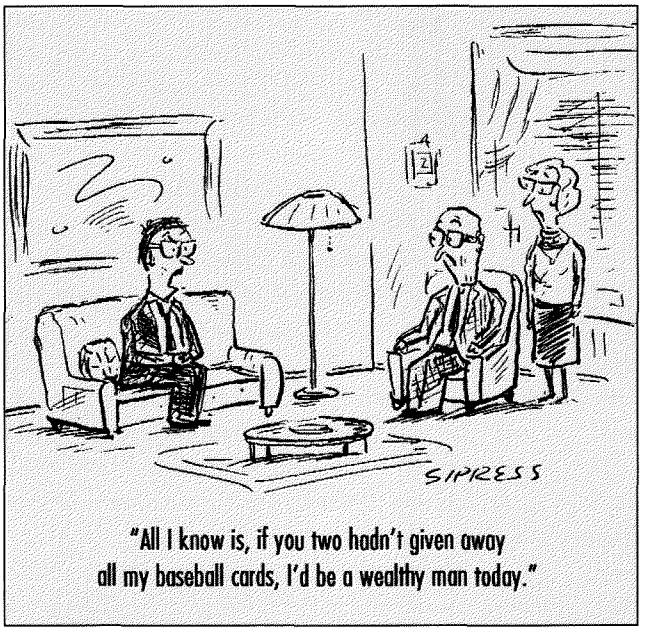
Sidelights

By Brandon Bosworth

A Rasmussen Reports survey found that 62 percent of American voters believe the world would be a better place if other countries became more like the United States. The number increased to 81 percent among **George W. Bush** voters, but fell to 48 percent among supporters of **John Kerry**. ❧ The Saudi Binladin Group, run by members of **Osama bin Laden**'s family, will likely be contracted to construct a building in Dubai nearly twice the size of the World Trade Center. ❧ The children's section of the Sunday *Seattle Times* featured an on-line poll with the query, "Who do you blame for 9/11?" Three choices were offered: "Bush," "**Clinton**" and "CIA." Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda were not among the options. ❧ "The Iraqis who have risen up against the occupation are not 'insurgents' or 'terrorists' or 'The Enemy'... They are the *revolution*, the Minutemen, and their numbers will grow—and they will win." So said "filmmaker" **Michael Moore** about America's enemies abroad.

University of California at Berkeley lecturer **Hatem Bazian**, a native Palestinian, asked a group of antiwar protesters in San Francisco: "How come we don't have an intifada in this country?... it's about time that we have an intifada in this country.... They're gonna say some Palestinian is being too radical...well, you haven't seen radicalism yet!" ❧ Due to high rates of re-enlistment, the U.S. Marine Corps had already fulfilled 90 percent of its force retention goal midway through the fiscal year. Re-enlistments are also high for the U.S. Army.

Volunteers at the U.K.'s Royal Air Force Base at Lakenheath, Suffolk began producing teddy bears and other soft toys from old and torn uniforms. The toys are intended for Iraqi children, but the group Suffolk 4 Peace is opposed to the plan. According to spokeswoman **Annie Wimbush**, "The camouflage material, the uniform material that's being used, could in fact trigger trauma symptoms in a child as well as relieve them." ❧ The *World Competitiveness Yearbook* —published by a leading Swiss business school—ranked 60 countries and regions based on the competitiveness of their economies. The U.S. ranked the highest, followed by Singapore, Canada, Australia, Iceland, and Hong Kong. The highest-ranked member of the European Union, Denmark, came in seventh. ❧



"All I know is, if you two hadn't given away all my baseball cards, I'd be a wealthy man today."

Harvard scientists studying inbreeding are focusing on Saudi Arabia. In the capital city of Riyadh, 58 percent of women marry blood relatives. ❧ There are now 150 million cell phones in the U.S. ❧ Forty-eight percent of Americans think it is likely that terrorists will attack the U.S. before the November elections, according to a *Newsweek*/ Princeton Survey Research poll.

Charges that Republicans will destroy Social Security have backfired, Bill Clinton notes—the share of the retiree vote going to the GOP has grown in recent elections. Clinton suggests his party embrace private accounts within the Social Security system. ❧ An E.U. report found a large increase in anti-Semitic incidents in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the U.K. France had the greatest increase, with nearly six times as many incidents in 2002 as in the previous year. Anti-Semitic acts were rare in some European nations, such as Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Austria, and Italy. ❧ 2003 marked the first year on record in which Germans drank more bottled water than beer, reports *Focus*, a German weekly news and entertainment magazine. ··· The German state of Bavaria will no longer require professional yodelers to wear lederhosen. ❧ The IRS is too short of auditors to pursue over 2 million known cases of underpaid taxes, says the *Washington Post*.

❧

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IT'S OVERSPENDING, STUPID

John Kerry has blamed George Bush's tax cuts for today's federal deficit, and proposed their repeal as a centerpiece of his economic strategy. Exactly how much of today's federal deficit would be eliminated by reversing the various Bush reforms? The Tax Foundation recently used the Congressional Budget Office economic model to make careful estimates.

First, economists from the Tax Foundation calculated what would happen if today's top two tax rates of 35 percent and 33 percent were restored to their pre-Bush levels of 39.6 percent and 36 percent. To this they added the money that would be raised in those brackets by once again allowing full double taxation of dividends. The total effect: This year's deficit would be reduced from $477 billion to $450 billion.

Second, the economists assumed that the rest of George Bush's capital gains and dividend income tax reductions would be eliminated. This further reduced next year's deficit—to $430 billion.

That exhausted all the tax cuts that could conceivably be described as benefiting primarily "the rich."

Next, the economists determined how much would be saved by returning all other tax brackets to their pre-Bush levels, including elimination of the reduced 10 percent rate Bush set up for low-income Americans. While this would cut into the earnings of many working and middle-class families, it would trim the deficit to a cumulative total of $360 billion.

Then the study authors restored the marriage penalty, repealed the increase of the child credit from $500 to $1,000, and eliminated the other remaining Bush reforms. (This would *really* lacerate middle- and working-class families.) Grand total effect: The 2004 deficit would end up at $313 billion.

In other words, even if every single one of George Bush's tax reductions were reversed, the deficit would only be cut by one third. Clearly, then, something else is driving today's growth of the federal deficit. That "something" is runaway spending.

What would John Kerry do about that? And what does George Bush propose?

Don't blame tax cuts

CBO estimate of 2004 budget deficit: $477 billion

If ALL Bush tax reforms are repealed: $313 billion

TRIUMPH TO TRAGEDY ON RACE

We've just marked the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the defining legal decision of the past century, in which the Supreme Court ruled school segregation by race to be un-Constitutional. Ten years later, with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Congress solidified the basic principle of *Brown*: a prohibition of all racial discrimination by government.

The history of race law since then has been one of breathtaking judicial misbehavior. The end of segregation and prohibition of official racial discrimination soon came to be seen by activists not as a triumph, but as an obstacle. Race activists pressed the nation to move from prohibiting segregation to compelling integration. In 1968 the Supreme Court granted their wish in *Green v. County School Board*, which required government race discrimination in order to mix the races.

This violated Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, which specifically warns that "'desegregation' shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance." No matter. The Court required busing to undo residential racial concentration and create near-perfect racial balance in the giant Charlotte-Mecklenberg, North Carolina school district.

The Court similarly converted the prohibition of race discrimination in employment in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act into a requirement of discrimination—by prohibiting employers from using ordinary employment criteria, such as level of education, if the result disqualified blacks. In the 1978 *Bakke* decision, and just recently in the University of Michigan Law School case, the Supreme Court next decided that the prohibition of race discrimination by institutions receiving federal funds, as spelled out in the Civil Rights Act's Title VI, was not violated by race discrimination in school admission.

The great achievement of *Brown v.*

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Board of Education was that it inspired a moral and legal crusade to remove the evil of race discrimination from all aspects of government and public life. Its ultimate effect, however, was so greatly to increase the power and prestige of the Supreme Court as to permit it to press other, much less justifiable, crusades. The disastrous results of forced school integration have been to waste money (over $2 billion in Kansas City, Missouri alone), drive whites out of cities, and destroy urban school districts—nearly all of which are now highly separated by race.

Education for both races has suffered. And judges are to blame.

—**Lino Graglia** *is professor of law at the University of Texas.*

HYSTERICAL PRESERVATION

Each spring, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the grumpy granddaddy of America's historical preservation organizations, releases a list of America's "most endangered historical places." While 2004's list includes a few worthy sites, such as Detroit's once lovely Madison-Lenox Hotel and a Utah canyon full of Native American art, most of this year's 11-item index represents a triumph of politics over common sense and aesthetic merit.

Historic preservation itself isn't a bad idea: Americans should be thankful that citizens, governments, and organizations like the Trust saved once-endangered places like Independence Hall, Washington, D.C.'s Union Station, and even the iconic gates that led to Chicago's Union Stockyards. But the Trust now seems to view the United States as a giant museum where no builder or developer should ever change anything.

Case in point: The state of Vermont —all 9,600 square miles of it—tops the Trust's ranking of endangered places. The Trust's justification is that Wal-Mart, which has operated throughout the state for 11 years, plans to expand some of its existing locations into Supercenters that include grocery stores. According to the Trust, six new stores will utterly transform Vermont and destroy its "unique sense of place."

Even if this did happen—and the Trust provides no evidence that it would—the busybodies who compiled the list can't seem to see that the stores won't have any effect unless Vermonters vote with their pocketbooks and choose to patronize them. If they do, who is the Trust to insist that Wal-Mart is bad for Vermont?

The absurdity, unfortunately, doesn't stop at the Green Mountain State's borders. Chicago's Old Cook County Hospital is a perfectly dreadful building: a petrified wedding cake renovated piecemeal by architects who looked to Darth Vader for architectural guidance. But the Trust insists it's a "gem" worthy of multi-million dollar renovation into expensive condos.

The Trust wants to preserve Maryland tobacco-storage barns that farmers used before the state finally paid them to stop growing the devil's weed. The Trust now favors another series of cash giveaways so farmers will maintain the now-useless barns indefinitely. Manhattan's Huntington-Hartford building likewise makes the list for being an "engagingly quirky icon." Translation: The marble-faced cubic monstrosity with lollipop-shaped windows is really, really ugly.

The real ugly prize, however, has to go to Bethlehem Works, a Pennsylvania steel-making complex that's been closed since the mid 1990s. Even the Trust admits that developers would have to tear down some of its buildings, but they still demand this industrial wreck be redeveloped into a steel-making museum surrounded by new housing. How many homeowners will find abandoned factory buildings delightful neighbors?

This is not the best way to spend money, or to beautify America.

FLIP. FLOP.

At the University of New Hampshire, John Kerry criticized President Bush for doing too little to support alternative and renewable energy. But when an environmentally state-of-the-art wind farm of 130 electricity-generating turbines was proposed near one of his pricey vacation homes, he sided with opponents in the exclusive enclaves of Nantucket Island and Martha's Vineyard—who complained that windmills would "mar ocean vistas and harm property values." Kerry's changed tune: "I think the proper thing to do is listen to the people who have concerns."

GERMANY'S HOLY RECYCLERS

In Germany, recycling has virtually been turned into a state-mandated religion. Green Party officials sprinkled throughout local government have written the hymns. Now all citizens must sing along. And the music is not easy.

All glass disposed of by Germans must be sorted into separate bins for green, brown, and clear varieties. Paper (newspapers, magazines, waste paper, paper bags, etc.) belongs in green bins. You're not to leave any plastic wrappers on boxes (which must be flattened). "Composite" materials, such as beverage cartons, go in the special yellow bin.

Biological waste like kitchen scraps, peels, leftover food, coffee grounds, and other biodegradable material must be collected—but not in plastic bags, only in paper bags (which inevitably leak). The government encourages its citizens to put this on a compost pile, but if they can't, then it goes in a gray bin—along with diapers, tissues, ash, cigarette butts. Everything in the gray bins is burned.

Wastes like old paint, disinfectants, insecticides, fluorescent light bulbs, etc. have to be brought to a special site. Old batteries are to be deposited in containers at local shopping areas.

This all takes time. It takes space. It takes energy.

Recently, further efforts were launched

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"At this point I'm so confused about what gets recycled that I've decided to do nothing."

in Germany on behalf of this ecological religion. A 30-cent deposit was put on every can or non-refillable bottle, no matter the size. It seems that even the conscientious Germans weren't always bothering to return their cans and bottles with lower deposit levels. To get the new deposit back you have to return all bottles, with the caps, to the same store where you bought them. With the receipt! If you bought your six-pack on the road, you're out a couple of bucks.

Don't look for consistency in the application of this ecological gospel. An apple juice and mineral-water mix has a deposit, but apple juice alone doesn't. The same distinction applies for iced tea, as opposed to carbonated iced tea.

The goal in all this, says the country's Green Party environment minister, Juergen Trittin, is "to stop the advance of the can." Sales of beverages in disposable cans and bottles have dropped 60 percent since the law was passed. The push is toward bottles that are washed, refilled, and recapped. The time, labor, energy, and collection costs imposed on German consumers and merchants for bottle-recycling and can-handling is utterly ignored by advocates.

Last October, new twists in the recycling liturgy were instituted by the Environment Ministry. There are now five different systems for bottle returns. Some can be returned to participating gas stations and stores. Others require a deposit coupon. The third system is a combination of the first two, and a fourth involves the big discount stores, which sell their own brands. Small stores with less than 200 square meters of floor space need only accept the brands of cans and bottles they sell.

These niggling rules on container recycling are part of a much larger mindset. German Greens are pressing for new controls in many areas of daily life. They want a 55 mph speed limit on the autobahn, and aim to limit vehicles to around 45 mph on state and county highways, and 30 mph in cities and towns. This is too much even for left-wing chancellor and Green Party ally Gerhard Schroeder, who has suggested, "The Greens are bent on self-destruction. Speed limits are up to local governments."

Green environmental policy also includes a flat rejection of air conditioning. There is institutionalized resistance to cooling even hospitals and public transportation. Amidst last summer's European heat wave, which killed 30,000 people, German weather service meteorologist Gerd Jendritzky proclaimed that air conditioning should not be instituted—because of ecological considerations! Conceding that several hundred Germans died because of the extreme heat, Jendritzky suggested behavioral palliatives. People should "get up earlier, take deep breaths, darken rooms, and plan the day's activities so that they are not outside during the day."

When you're a zealous missionary, a few hundred dead people can easily be justified.

—**Jane Mack-Cozzo** *has lived and studied in Heidelberg, Germany.*

BOUNTIES FOR TECH JOCKS!

It's draft time for the NBA, and a select few high school seniors will earn more than a diploma. Projections of the June 24 draft show that as many as seven high school seniors will be selected in the first round. While these select few go off to fame and fortune, America will look to the remaining graduates for the skills necessary for its security and economic prosperity—which largely depend on those in the fields of science, math, and engineering—citizens who give America technical advantages over our competitors and enemies. But we will not be able to hold those advantages without effort.

America's lead in science is slipping. The number of science and engineering graduates, patents, and Nobel prizes in America has been decreasing over recent years. If this trend continues, it will directly affect our strength and security.

Instead of just pouring more money into research and development, we should focus more tightly on the individuals who will become our future scientists and engineers. If more American students passed technical classes like calculus in high school, this would lead eventually to more scientists, engineers, and mathematicians—which would translate into more patents and advanced technologies.

So how do we get more kids to succeed at subjects like calculus? How about financial incentives? If we rewarded high school students with $1,500 stipends for passing calculus, wouldn't this lead to more students with a technical background?

America probably has more teenagers today working hard to be athletes than to be scientists and engineers. Visit a local youth sporting event and see the money and passion parents pour into

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their child's athletic success. Our society ought to highlight and reward early success in math and science with the same flair.

Our country desperately needs to transform our education system into one that rewards success in technical fields. Such a transformation would certainly face an uphill fight from defenders of the status quo. If those defenders have a better plan for inspiring more scientists, engineers, and mathematicians, they should bring it on. Otherwise, they should accept the fact that America doesn't have enough aspiring minds seeking success in math and science—and try some creative ways of amending that.

—**Newt Gingrich** *is a senior fellow, and* **Mark Kester**, *a Navy fellow, at AEI.*

NON-LEFT STUDENTS STRIKE BACK

Politically and culturally, America's college campuses are some of the least diverse places in the nation. In faculty suites and classrooms, liberal orthodoxy is the only approved view. (See concrete documentation of this phenomenon in *TAE*'s September 2002 issue.)

Protecting dissent from left-wing worldviews on campus is no small task. The Academic Bill of Rights promoted by author David Horowitz is the latest attempt. It issues guidelines for academic freedoms that encompass hiring practices, grading policies, curriculum standards, and guest-speaker selection. One of the primary tenets of the Bill is to protect students and faculty from becoming indoctrinated by professors' personal opinions: "Intellectual independence means the protection of students—as well as faculty—from the imposition of any orthodoxy of a political, religious, or ideological nature." The Bill is intentionally devoid of all political references, merely aiming for an environment that is truly open to different ideas and viewpoints.

A group promoting the Bill of Rights, Students for Academic Freedom, claims 123 chapters at universities nationwide. It seeks to "end the political abuse of the university and to restore integrity to the academic mission as a disinterested pursuit of knowledge." Its Web site features an "Academic Bias Complaint Form" for students, and comments are categorized and published on the site.

One goal is to persuade state and national legislatures to adopt their own academic bills of rights. Legislation has been introduced in Colorado with the aim of regulating the way universities there deal with bias complaints. Up to six other states may follow Colorado's lead.

Some opponents claim there is no need for such protections. "The Academic Bill of Rights is redundant," states the American Association of University Professors. Prominent academic radical Stanley Fish of the University of Illinois at Chicago objects that "intellectual diversity is not a stand-alone academic value, no more than is free speech; either can be a help in the pursuit of truth, but neither should be identified with it."

The deepest complaint from campuses: an academic bill of rights would give governments permission to meddle with academia. Government meddling in civil society? Imagine that.

—*Former* TAE *intern* **Amy Thoma** *recently graduated from UCLA.*

DRAWING FIRE

New York City's contemporary art world has seen everything this season—from a "painting" made of dead flies to footage of JFK's autopsy. But perhaps nothing puzzled Manhattan more than an exhibition last October of 45 drawings and watercolors of the war in Iraq. Created by New York painter Steve Mumford, the works were largely unsensational, politically neutral scenes he witnessed while embedded in military units. "War art fascinates me," says the lean, slightly grizzled 43 year old. "Especially images of soldiers attempting to establish some normalcy in their lives."

"I didn't want to be polemical or admiring," Mumford says, "I just depicted what I saw." But his images struck a nerve in the notoriously left-leaning art world. Although critics praised their aesthetic merits, many criticized their content. "People attacked me for being objective, and not condemning the war," recalls the artist. One critic questioned whether Mumford had succumbed to the "military logic of the embed." Another decried his attempt to turn the Iraqi "slaughterhouse" into "tastefully smeared contour studies."

In many ways, the art world's reaction to Mumford's show reflected its general perplexity toward the post-9/11 era. Artists have generally avoided addressing the topic of war, Islam, or the Middle East. Or they've been unforgivably crass: A mere seven months after the Trade Center attack, international art star Maurizio Cattalan showed a work in New York consisting of two life-sized mannequins dressed as NYPD officers, turned upside down. The artist described

COSTLY BEETLES AND MOTHS

A recent study by the Political Economy Research Center found that the costs of the Endangered Species Act are many times greater than what the federal government officially reports. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that the controls in the act cost $610 million in fiscal year 2000, but the true total is closer to $3.5 billion or more per year, according to economists Randy Simmons and Kimberly Frost.

Many costs are not reported in the official report, they note. Moreover, expenditures are extremely uneven for different creatures. Seven animals—just 0.6 percent of all endangered species—absorb half of all spending. "The Endangered Species Act may be a waste of taxpayer dollars," they conclude.

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COMMON SENSE, RIP

Today we mourn the passing
of a beloved old friend,
with us for many years,
by the name of Common Sense.

He'll be remembered for such things as
knowing to come in out of the rain,
that the early bird gets the worm,
and that life isn't always fair.

He lived by simple financial rules
(don't spend more than you earn),
and sound parenting strategies
(adults are in charge, not kids).

His health began to deteriorate
when bureaucratic red tape
and overbearing regulations
began to take over.

Suddenly six-year-old boys
began to be charged
with sexual harassment
for kissing classmates.

Teens were suspended from school
for using mouthwash after lunch,
and teachers fired for
reprimanding unruly students.

Common Sense's condition worsened
as criminals began to receive
better treatment and more rights
than their victims.

When schools were required
to get parental consent to
administer aspirin to a student,
while the same schools

were forbidden from informing parents
when a pregnant student
wanted to have an abortion,
Common Sense lost the will to live.

He finally gave up the ghost after a lady,
not realizing that steaming coffee is hot,
was awarded a huge payment
for spilling it in her lap.

Common Sense was preceded in death
by his parents: Truth and Responsibility,
his children Discretion and Trust,
and his wife, Reason.

—adapted from the Internet samizdat

this as "a new icon of subversion"—as if New York City needed one.

"After paying lip service to the heroes of 9/11, the art world has reverted to impotent anti-American whining," says critic Charlie Finch, one of the art community's few hawks. The 1990s hobbyhorses of gender, race, and postmodernism that 9/11 rendered largely irrelevant to the vast majority of the country are back as obsessions. Contemporary artists have simply recused themselves from today's most pressing national dilemma.

It wasn't always like this: Goya, Manet, Picasso, and others depicted the conflicts that rent their generations. Mumford's hero is Winslow Homer, who depicted Civil War scenes for *Harper's Weekly*. "Artists need to get out in the world, to grapple with the difficult issues of the day," he says.

Following Homer's precedent, Mumford went to Iraq in April 2003, wandering from the southern city of Basra north to the Turkish border. To his surprise, he found the military willing to accommodate civilians seeking to travel with combat units. "In Baghdad," he recalls, "I told an officer sitting in a Bradley that I was an artist who wanted to depict military life. He said, 'Get on board,' and there I was, roaring through the city's streets."

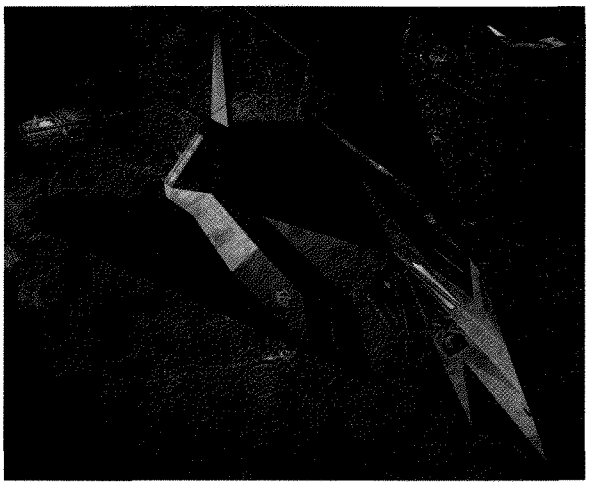
On his second trip during the fall of 2003, and his third visit this winter, the artist managed to accompany troops throughout the Sunni Triangle, where he learned to fear ambushes and nightly mortar attacks. "To accurately depict what soldiers face in Iraq, I had to understand the dangers they experience." As for the soldiers' reaction, "at first they thought it was weird that someone wanted to draw them—then they got used to it."

There are other artists who have recorded images from Iraq. "I see myself as a sort of warrior-poet," says Staff Sergeant Michael Fay, one of two uniformed artists in the Marines. After serving a previous 13-year enlistment, Fay re-enlisted in the Marines in 2000, at the age of 47, to be a combat artist.

The Air Force has long used civilian combat artists, primarily drawn from organizations like the U.S. Society of Illustrators. "The Air Force has taken our members to bases around the world since 1954," says director Terrence Brown. Heavy-handed patriotism is avoided, as are scenes of wartime casualties. Still, Brown adds, "the military never tells artists what to paint." So far, the Air Force has sent 12 artists to Iraq, including Dallas-based artist Daniel Hartmann, who started the painting at the bottom of this column while in Baghdad.

Like Winslow Homer, Steve Mumford is attempting to bridge the gap between illustration and fine art, real-world politics and contemporary art-world triviality, respect for the military and free expression—all the while demonstrating that a hand-crafted painting can, in many ways, record reality with more emotional accuracy than the camera. Unfortunately, this old-fashioned notion of art, his non-judgmental attitude toward war, and his willingness to take risks to record it place him distinctly outside the mainstream of today's art world.

—**Steven Vincent** *has spent many weeks reporting from Iraq over the past year.*



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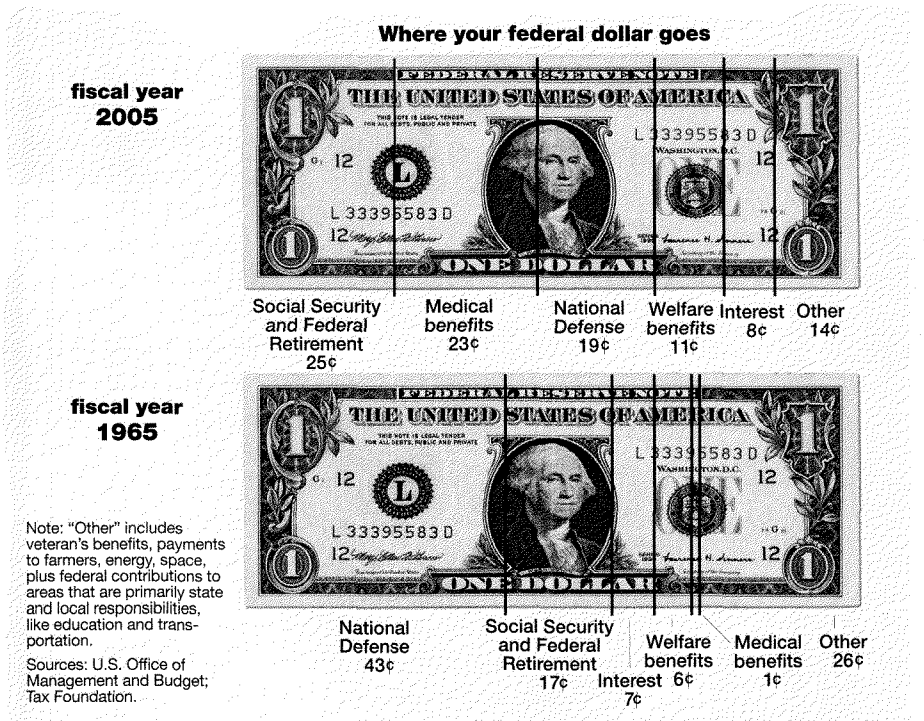
By Karl Zinsmeister and Eli Lehrer

Indicators

ENTITLEMENT EXPLOSION

National defense consumes vastly less of your federal taxes compared to 40 years ago. But a tsunami of new spending on Medicare, Social Security, and other welfare "entitlements" has left lawmakers with less control over the nation's spending.

Mandatory spending now represents more than two thirds of the federal budget: Entitlements consume 59 cents of every dollar, and interest payments eat up another 8 cents. Back in 1965, entitlements represented just 24 cents, while interest took 7 cents.

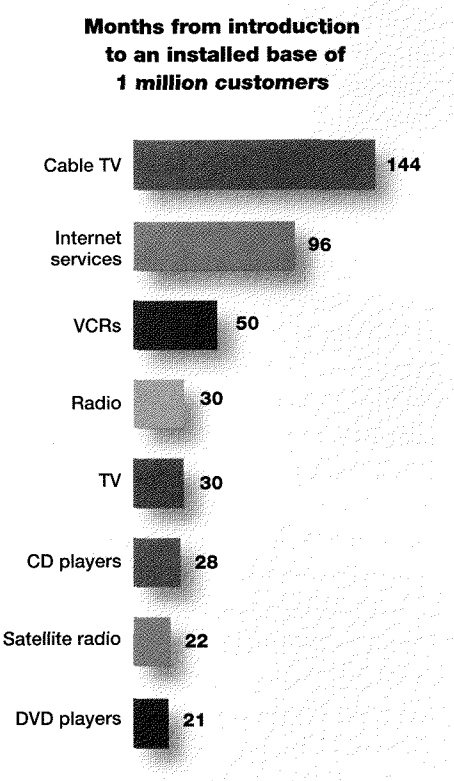


Note: "Other" includes veteran's benefits, payments to farmers, energy, space, plus federal contributions to areas that are primarily state and local responsibilities, like education and transportation.

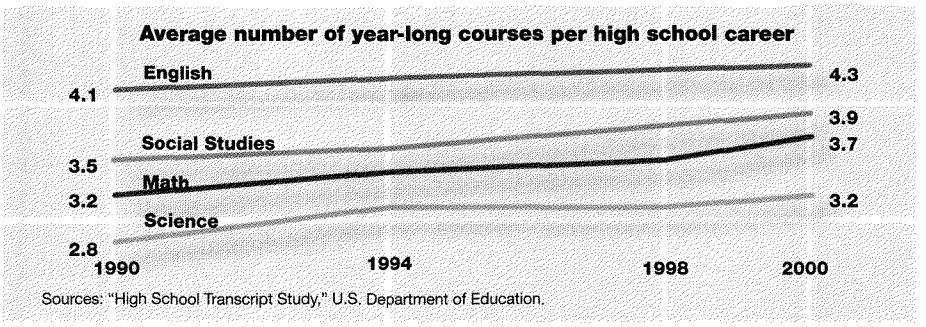
Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget; Tax Foundation.

TECHNOLOGY UPTAKE

The pace at which consumers adopt new technologies in entertainment and communications is increasing.



Sources: XM Radio; *TAE* research.



Sources: "High School Transcript Study," U.S. Department of Education.

HARDER HIGH SCHOOL

By at least one measure, the push for back-to-basics academics has paid off. A new study from the U.S. Department of Education shows that high school students across the country are spending more time than they used to in core academic courses.

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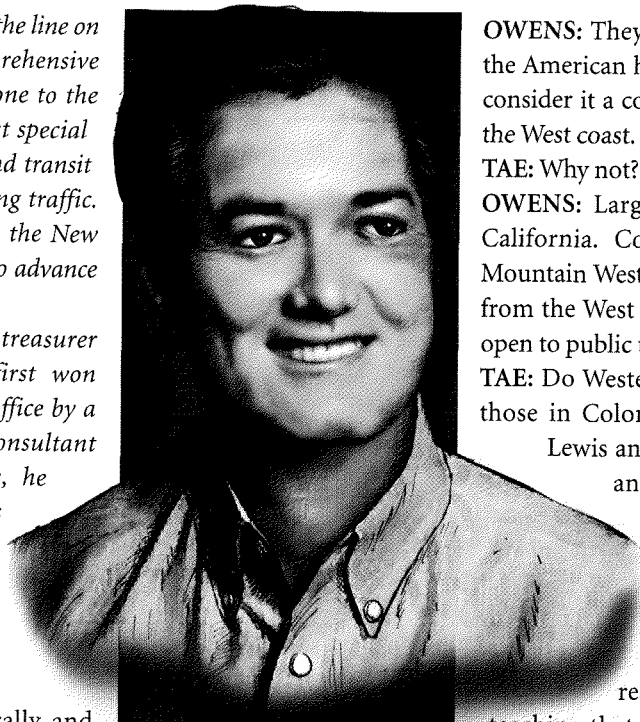
"Live" with TAE

A Texan by birth, he is now governor of Colorado, where he epitomizes the libertarian and conservative politics of the West perhaps better than any other elected official in the nation.

Bill Owens

Colorado governor Bill Owens has held the line on state spending, created the most comprehensive school voucher plan in the country, gone to the mat against powerful environmentalist special interests, and pushed ahead on road and transit projects to clear up the state's worsening traffic. Through his newly formed Center for the New American Century, he is now working to advance his views on the national level.

A Colorado state legislator and treasurer before becoming governor, Owens first won election in 1998 and was returned to office by a record majority in 2002. A business consultant for 20 years before entering politics, he moved out of the Colorado governor's mansion to shelter his children from the media spotlight. Bill Owens spoke with TAE *associate editor Eli Lehrer in Washington, D.C.*



The West attracts people who are more liberty-loving, more individualistic, and less dependent on government.

TAE: Are Western Americans politically and culturally different from other Americans? Specifically, is there a libertarian "Don't Tread On Me" aspect to Western politics?

OWENS: There is. In some respects it's self-selection: People who moved there from other parts of the country often uprooted themselves specifically for the space and liberty the West offered. Not only in the pioneering days, but more recently. I myself am not a native of Colorado, I moved here. In fact, when I ran for governor there were five candidates in the race and none of us were native to Colorado. So I think the West is different not only because of its wide open spaces but because it tends to attract people who are more liberty-loving, more individualistic, and less dependent upon government.

TAE: Do people in Colorado tend to feel they're more a part of the West coast or more a part of the middle-American heartland?

OWENS: They feel that they're more a part of the American heartland. Coloradans would not consider it a compliment to be lumped in with the West coast.

TAE: Why not?

OWENS: Largely, they have a problem with California. Colorado is part of the Rocky Mountain West—a band of states very different from the West coast—not as liberal, and more open to public use of public lands, for instance.

TAE: Do Western schoolchildren, particularly those in Colorado, still thrill to learn about Lewis and Clark, the Alamo, the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails? Are these things still part of the shared cultural memory of the region?

OWENS: You know, I'm afraid that the answer is probably not as much as I'd like. In many respects public schools aren't teaching that shared cultural memory. They are teaching the values of "diversity" at the expense of that history. I'd be surprised if Colorado school children really spend much time on the Alamo or the settling of the American West, except insofar as it relates to mistreatment of the American Indian. There's room for both subjects, so I'm hoping we can start to once again use our public schools to pass on to future generations those shared values. While diversity is important, it's also vital to understand our commonality.

And diversity needs to be properly defined. At the college level I'm asking Colorado's higher education system to make intellectual diversity on campus a priority. And what's missing on many campuses today are non-liberal views. During the 1970s, I attended the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, and when the L.B.J. School invited me back as an

Illustration by Paul Loughran

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alumnus to speak to the students, I told them I never learned anything at the school about the real challenges of practical politics I faced over the following two decades. We didn't discuss the balanced budget. We didn't discuss the fact that the Soviets could be defeated. I haven't been invited back to the L.B.J. School since.

TAE: You've passed the most comprehensive school choice plan in the country—a plan that provides vouchers to most lower-income families that want them. Is school a choice plan this broad appropriate for all states?

OWENS: I believe in the federal system where each state makes these decisions on its own. But I would highly recommend more choice and more power for parents and students. What we're doing in Colorado is certainly good for us and should be considered by every state.

TAE: What about a federal voucher proposal, like the one Senator McCain has repeatedly proposed?

OWENS: That would make a lot of sense. I support virtually anything that adds more choice, more options, more opportunity, and more fear of failure within K-12 education.

TAE: Your school choice plan has significant testing requirements for private schools. This is the sort of thing some libertarians were afraid of: school choice becoming a way of imposing regulations on private schools. What has the response from the private schools been like?

OWENS: One of the reasons voucher bills have been defeated around the country is the specter of these dollars going to ethnic separatists, or terrorists, or the Ku Klux Klan. We had to address that concern and I think we've done so in a balanced way. The private schools have been supportive. They have the opportunity to opt in or choose to remain out of the system. If they choose to accept that voucher from the parent, there are some minimal standards they have to meet.

TAE: You've been outspoken on the subject of endangered species. Is the mission of the Endangered Species Act a good one? Should every animal species be saved?

OWENS: When the Endangered Species Act was passed, most of the debate was about animals like the American bald eagle and the grizzly bear. The act has since been used by some parts of the environmental community to stop growth, to freeze all development, and to attack private property rights by uncovering very obscure plants or insects, some of them not substantively distinctive from other creatures. The act has been used to accomplish political ends. Should every species be saved? I think that's not only unrealistic but also impossible. There is a natural order, which means that some species will always be sublimated while other species are on the ascendant. I favor giving a helping hand to species when we can, but within reason.

TAE: Tell us a little about this endangered species hatchery program you've devised in Colorado.

OWENS: As governor I typically look at the 49 other states and try to apply what has already worked elsewhere to Colorado—because we have 50 laboratories of democracy.

As a Coloradan, I'm very familiar with the way endangered species can cause serious loss of control over property. The creatures we're discussing are, for example, species like Preble's Jumping Mouse. So Colorado is now breeding and hatching hundreds of thousands of endangered species: fish, mammals, frogs. And we're re-inserting them back into Colorado's rivers, streams, and ponds.

What's been interesting to me has been the response of the environmental community. Sometimes it has actually opposed these attempts. I think that reflects the underlying agenda of some environmentalists—which is not necessarily to protect the species but instead to control use of the land.

TAE: Would it be a good idea for the federal government to compensate states and private property owners for the use of their land through the Endangered Species Act or other regulations?

OWENS: Yes. I signed a bill that requires the Colorado state government to compensate land owners for takings. If a federal law has a fiscal impact on states or private property, I think it's only fair to ask the federal government to help with those costs.

TAE: You've been a strong opponent of efforts to create a national sales tax on e-commerce. Are there any circumstances under which you think it might be appropriate to tax Internet sales?

OWENS: Not at this time. I obviously reserve future judgment, because it's hard to envision the policy landscape some years from now. But I see no valid argument for taxing e-commerce

As governor I typically look at the 49 other states and try to apply what has already worked elsewhere. We have 50 laboratories of democracy.

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now. A local bricks-and-mortar retail shop collects a sales tax to help fund those public services it uses: the local police, the local fire department. On-line retailers already pay retail sales taxes for whatever locality they are in. I don't see why they ought to collect taxes for governments from which they receive no benefit.

TAE: Is it a good idea for elected officials to promise flatly that they won't raise taxes, as you did?

OWENS: I think it depends on the specifics. In Colorado's case, we have a constitutional provision forbidding new taxes without a vote of the people. I believe we should always be able to operate within the increases allowed by that constitutional amendment. In Colorado our revenues can increase by the sum of inflation and population growth, and so as long as I'm governor I'll run the state within that restriction.

During bad economic times it's a mistake to raise taxes, and during good economic times revenues will go up consistent with the prosperity of the private sector. Colorado's government decided that it would grow only consistent with the health of its private sector, and I think that's a very valid public policy. The government *can* grow faster than the private sector upon a vote of the people. Many Colorado governments have chosen to do that, and the people have approved the tax increases. But it's very much a democratic process.

TAE: So candidates for President should promise not to raise taxes?

OWENS: Yes, so long as you leave yourself an out for legitimate national emergency. You've got to allow yourself the option to do whatever it takes to protect the republic. But those circumstances come up very rarely.

TAE: How important is it to balance state budgets—and the federal budget for that matter?

OWENS: Most state budgets are constitutionally required to be balanced, and it's obviously important to obey your state constitution. I understand that today's federal budget is not in balance, and I also understand the reasons why: the war on terrorism and the economic slowdown. The tax cuts that President Bush has put in place only account for 18 percent of the current deficit. And because those tax cuts will yield increased economic growth, I believe they will ultimately *increase* tax revenues.

By constitutional provision in Colorado, government revenues can increase only by the sum of inflation and population growth. As long as I'm governor I'll run the state within that restriction.

TAE: But even with homeland security and defense left out, federal discretionary domestic spending has grown faster under Bush than it did under Clinton. Why haven't conservatives on the national level been better at holding the line on spending?

OWENS: Because I don't think conservatives at the national level are truly in charge of those spending decisions. Even with a one- or two-vote Republican Senate and perhaps a ten-vote Republican House, conservatives aren't in control. You have a moderate to liberal wing of the Republican Party. This helps give us our majority but doesn't give us operational control over budget decisions. A few Republicans linked up with almost every Democrat give moderates and liberals the operational control of the House and Senate on many spending decisions.

TAE: Do you think that federal or state laws should prohibit discrimination against homosexuals?

OWENS: No, I don't think so. Such laws could countermand, for instance, the bill I signed in Colorado that defines marriage as between a man and a woman. I am not in favor of discrimination against people, but I think you should save protected status only for the most important distinctions.

TAE: Would you support a Constitutional amendment to ban abortion in the United States?

OWENS: I'd prefer to do it state by state. I wish we didn't have *Roe v. Wade* sitting as a federal standard. I have serious objections to *Roe v. Wade*, but I think it's impractical to ban abortion altogether given the state of our country. The goal I strongly support: I would like to change the public debate and consensus so that such a law would be respected and obeyed.

TAE: Should the United States intervene overseas simply to relieve chaos and suffering, or does a more compelling interest need to exist?

OWENS: This is where I'll part from some of my libertarian friends. I think that a great power like the United States sometimes has a responsibility to do things simply because it's the right thing to do, not because of a direct and immediate positive impact on American interests and security. If, with little risk, we can save hundreds of thousands of lives, I would on a case-by-case basis apply American force accordingly. You have to be careful of the Haitis, the Somalias, but you also have to ask yourself, "Would it have been worth

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the risk to save a million lives in Rwanda?"

TAE: President Bush declared, "We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime." Do you agree?

OWENS: I do. As governor I'm often asked, "What guarantees can you give us in Colorado that we're safe from terrorism?" I say very clearly, "I can't give you any such guarantees." In a democracy, we can't harden each potential site where terrorists could attack. The only way to protect Coloradans from terrorism is to go after the terrorists where they live, work, train, and recruit. And that's often places that are in chaos.

TAE: Did you agree or disagree with the Bush administration's decision to impose tariffs on imported steel?

OWENS: I strongly opposed them.

TAE: Tell us about your decision to move your family out of the Colorado governor's mansion.

OWENS: It's a beautiful building—more than 10,000 square feet of living space. But the first floor is a public building, and so when we would be upstairs trying to have dinner, there would be a reception going on with 150 people right below us. You'd be out in the back throwing a baseball with your son, and people would be looking through the iron fences at you. It was so public that it became difficult to raise children in that environment. We tried it for a year and a half, and then moved back out to the suburbs. If we didn't have children, I'd love to live in the mansion.

TAE: Could you imagine living in the even more intense fishbowl of the White House, with or without children?

OWENS: You know, it would be difficult. I remember George W. Bush, when he was trying to decide whether he would run for President, saying, "If I decide to do this and am successful, I will never be by myself again. I can't go fishing by myself. I can't take the bass boat out by myself." You are always in the public eye as governor, probably more so than a U.S. senator, and I would have even less privacy as President. I would have a hard time with that. I think anybody would.

TAE: Might you run for President in 2008?

OWENS: The chances are that I won't. It's not something I'm thinking about or planning toward. I do have a plan to push the policies I support in whatever venue I can. If people listen to me more because they wonder what I'm likely to do next, then that's a wonderful opportunity to advance a conservative agenda. I won't say never; I'll wait and see how I do in my second term as governor.

TAE: What do you do in your free time?

OWENS: A lot of it is spent with the children. We still have a 12-year-old, a 17-year-old, and a 20-year-old. I run. I play baseball—I went to the Colorado Rockies spring training Fantasy Camp this year as a player. We hike. I do a lot of reading.

TAE: What's the last book you read for fun unconnected to public policy?

OWENS: Well, few of my books are connected to public policy, though some might think they are. Right now I'm reading *O Jerusalem!*, a story of the era when Israel got its independence. That's because I went to Israel a month ago for the first time. I'm also reading the second Edmund Morris book on Teddy Roosevelt. I loved the first. Neither of those is because of public policy; they're both for enjoyment. I'm a big fan of biographies. I also read a lot on the Soviet Union; I own probably 400 books about Russia.

TAE: What television do you like?

OWENS: I like "Friends" a lot, I like "Will and Grace." I watch a lot of baseball. I watch ESPN "Sports Night." I flip through the channels. I'll admit to watching more television than most people do. I'll sit and read newspapers or read a book while I have the television on. I don't watch any of the reality shows. I think they're kind of silly.

TAE: What types of music do you like?

OWENS: I like rock music from the '70s and '80s—Chicago, the Moody Blues, Bruce Springsteen. I'm not big into plays or opera but I love the *Phantom of the Opera*. I have that complete in a number of versions. I don't know why, I just love the music! I also love Soviet marching songs. Before I go into debates I always listen to Russian marching music.

We can't harden each potential site where terrorists could attack. The only defense is to go after the terrorists where they live, work, train, and recruit.

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Are We A Nation "Under God"?

BY SAMUEL HUNTINGTON

As this issue of *The American Enterprise* goes to press in June, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance are a violation of the separation of church and state. In 2002, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco decided by a two-to-one vote that the phrase represented an un-Constitutional "endorsement of religion" and "a profession of religious belief...in monotheism."

President Bush termed this decision "ridiculous." Senate minority leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) called it "nuts"; Governor George Pataki of New York said it was "junk justice." The Senate passed a resolution, 99 to zero, urging that the decision be reversed, and members of the House of Representatives gathered on the steps of the Capitol to recite the Pledge and sing "God Bless America." A *Newsweek* poll found that 87 percent of the public supported inclusion of the words, while 9 percent were opposed. Eighty-four percent also said they approved of references to God in public settings, including schools and government buildings, so long as no "specific religion" was mentioned.

This battle over the Pledge has stimulated vigorous controversy on an issue central to America's identity. Opponents of "under God" (which was added to the pledge in 1954) argue that the United States is a secular country, that the First Amendment prohibits rhetorical or material state support for religion, and that people should be able to pledge allegiance to their country without implicitly also affirming a belief in God. Supporters point out that the phrase is perfectly consonant with the views of the framers of the Constitution, that Lincoln had used these words in the Gettysburg Address, and that the Supreme Court has long held that no one could be compelled to say the Pledge.

The man who brought this court challenge, Michael Newdow, aims "to ferret out all insidious uses of religion in daily life," according to the *New York Times*. "Why should I be made to feel like an outsider?" he asked. The Court of Appeals in San Francisco agreed that the words "under God" sent "a message to unbelievers that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community."

Newdow and the court majority got it right: Atheists are "outsiders" in the American community. Americans are one of the most religious people in the world, particularly compared to the peoples of other highly industrialized democracies. But they nonetheless tolerate and respect the rights of atheists and nonbelievers. Unbelievers do not have to recite the Pledge, or engage in any religiously tainted practice of which they disapprove. They also, however, do not have the right to impose their atheism on all those Americans whose beliefs now and historically have defined America as a religious nation.

Statistics say America is not only a religious nation but also a Christian one. Up to 85 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians. Brian Cronin, who litigated against a cross on public land in Boise, Idaho, complained, "For Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians in Boise, the cross only drives home the point that they are strangers in a strange land." Like Newdow and the Ninth Circuit judges, Cronin was on target. America is a predominantly Christian nation with a secular government. Non-Christians may legitimately see themselves as strangers because they or their ancestors moved to this "strange land" founded and peopled by Christians—even as Christians become strangers by moving to Israel, India, Thailand, or Morocco.

Samuel Huntington is Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor at Harvard, and a member of AEI's Council of Academic Advisers. This is adapted from his latest book Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity.

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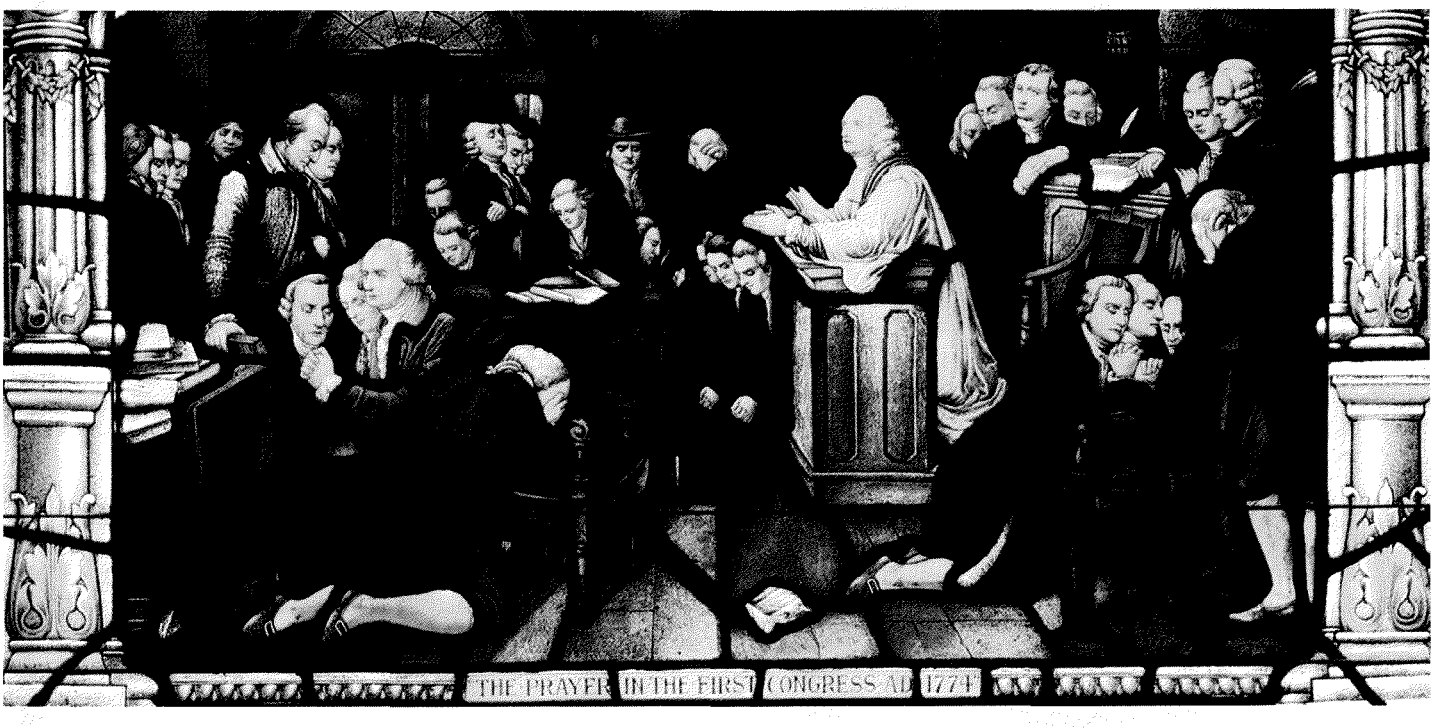

Christ Church, Philadelphia

Americans have been extremely religious and overwhelmingly Christian throughout their history. The seventeenth-century settlers founded their communities in America in large part for religious reasons. Eighteenth-century Americans and their leaders saw their Revolution in religious and largely biblical terms. The Revolution reflected their "covenant with God" and was a war between "God's elect" and the British "Antichrist." Jefferson, Paine, and other Deists and nonbelievers felt it necessary to invoke religion to justify the Revolution. The Continental Congress declared days of fasting to implore the forgiveness and help of God, and days of thanksgiving for what He had done to promote their cause. Well into the nineteenth century, Sunday church services were held in the chambers of the Supreme Court and the House of Representatives. The Declaration of Independence appealed to "Nature's God," the "Creator," "the Supreme Judge of the World," and "divine Providence" for approval, legitimacy, and protection.

The Constitution includes no such references. Yet its framers firmly believed that the republican government they were creating could only last if it was deeply rooted in morality and religion. "A Republic can only be supported by pure religion or austere morals," John Adams said. The Bible offers "the only system that ever did or ever will preserve a republic in the world." Washington agreed: "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." The happiness of the people, good order, and civil government, declared the Massachusetts constitution of 1780, "essentially depend on piety, religion, and morality." Fifty years after the Constitution was adopted, Tocqueville reported that all Americans held religion "to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions."

The words "separation of church and state" do not appear in the Constitution, and, as the historian Sidney Mead has pointed out, Madison spoke not of "church" and "state," European concepts with little relevance to America, but of "sects" and "Civil authority," and the "line" not the "wall" between them. Religion and society were coterminous.

Some people cite the absence of religious language in the Constitution and the provisions of the First Amendment as evidence that America is fundamentally a secular country. Nothing could be further from the truth. At the end of the eighteenth century, religious establishments existed throughout Europe and in several American states. Control of the church was a key element of state power, and the established church, in turn, provided legitimacy to the state. The framers of the American Constitution prohibited an established national church in order to limit the power of government and to protect and strengthen religion. The purpose of "separation of church and state," as William McLoughlin has said, was not to establish freedom *from* religion but to establish freedom *for* religion. It was spectacularly successful. In the absence of a state religion, Americans were not only free to believe as they wished but also free to create whatever religious communities and organizations they desired. As a result, Americans have been unique among peoples in the diversity of sects, denominations, and religious movements to which they have given birth, almost all embodying some form of Protestantism. When substantial numbers of Catholic immigrants arrived, it was eventually possible to accept Catholicism as one more denomination within the broad framework of Christianity. The proportion of the population who were "religious

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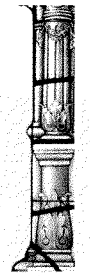
adherents," that is church members, increased fairly steadily through most of American history.

European observers repeatedly commented on the high levels of religious commitment of Americans compared to that of their own peoples. As usual, Tocqueville said it most eloquently: "On my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention, and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things." In France religion and liberty opposed each other. The Americans, in contrast, "have succeeded [in] combining admirably...the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty." Religion in America "must be regarded as the first of their political institutions."

America's religious commitment is the primary source of our exceptional history.



A half century after Tocqueville, English historian and statesman James Bryce came to a similar conclusion. The Americans are "a religious people"; religion "influences conduct...probably more than it does in any other modern country, and far more than it did in the so-called ages of faith." And again, "the influence of Christianity seems to be…greater and more widespread in the United States than in any part of western Continental Europe, and I think greater than in England." A half century after Bryce, the eminent Swedish observer Gunnar Myrdal judged that "America probably is still the most religious country in the Western world." And a half century after him, the English historian Paul Johnson described America as "a God-fearing country, with all it implies." America's religious commitment "is a primary source—*the* primary source, I think—of American exceptionalism."

Today, overwhelming majorities of Americans affirm religious beliefs. When asked in 1999 whether they believed in God, or a universal spirit, or neither, 86 percent of those polled said they believed in God, 8 percent in a universal spirit, and 5 percent in neither. When asked in 2003 simply whether they believed in God or not, 92 percent said yes. In a series of 2002–03 polls, 57 to 65 percent of Americans said religion was very important in their lives, 23 to 27 percent said fairly important, and 12 to 18 percent said not very important. In 1996, 39 percent of Americans said they believed the Bible is the actual word of God and should be taken literally; 46 percent said they believed the Bible is the word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally word for word; 13 percent said it is not the word of God.

Large proportions of Americans also appear to be active in the practice of their religion. In 2002 and 2003, an average of 65 percent of Americans claimed membership in a church or synagogue. About 40 percent said they had attended church or synagogue in the last seven days. Roughly 33 percent said they went to church at least once a week, 10 percent almost every week, 15 percent about once a month, 27 percent seldom or a few times a year, and 15 percent never. In the same time period, about 60 percent of Americans said they prayed one or more times a day, more than 20 percent once or more a week, about 10 percent less than once a week, and 10 percent never. Given human nature, these claims of religious practice may be overstated, but even accounting for this factor, the level of religious activity was still high; and the extent to which Americans believe the right response is to affirm their religiosity is itself evidence for the centrality of religious norms in American society.

Reflecting on the depth of American religiosity, the Swedish theologian Krister Stendhal remarked, "Even the atheists in America speak in a religious key." Only about 10 percent of Americans, however, espouse atheism, and most Americans do not approve of it. A 1973 poll asked: "Should a socialist or an atheist be allowed to teach in a college or university?" The community leaders surveyed approved of both teaching. The American public as a whole agreed that socialists could teach (52 percent yes, 39 percent no), but decisively rejected the idea of atheists on college or university faculties (38 percent yes, 57 percent no). Since the 1930s, the willingness of Americans to vote for a Presidential candidate from a minority group has increased dramatically, with over 90 percent of those polled in 1999 saying they would vote for a black, Jewish, or female Presidential candidate, while 59 percent were willing to vote for a homosexual. Only 49 percent, however, were willing to vote for an atheist. Americans seem to agree with the Founding Fathers that their republican government requires a religious base, and hence they find it difficult to accept the explicit rejection of God and religion.

These high levels of religiosity would be less significant if they were the norm for other countries. Americans differ dramatically, however, in their religiosity from the people of other economically developed countries. This religiosity is conclusively revealed in three cross-national surveys. First, in general, the level of religious commitment of countries varies inversely with their level of economic development: People in poor countries are highly religious, those in rich countries are not. America is the glaring exception. If America were like most other countries at her level of economic development, only 5 percent of Americans would think religion very important.

Second, an International Social Survey Program questionnaire in 1991 asked people in 17 countries seven questions concerning their belief in God, life after death, heaven, and other religious concepts. Reporting the results, George Bishop ranked the countries according to the percentage of their population that affirmed these religious beliefs. The United States was far ahead in its overall level of religiosity, ranking first on four questions, second on one, and third on two, for an average ranking of 1.7. It was followed by Northern Ireland (2.4), where religion is obviously of crucial importance to both Protestants and Catholics, and then by four Catholic countries. After them came

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New Zealand, Israel, five Western European countries, and four former communist countries, with East Germany last, the least religious on six of the seven questions. According to this poll, Americans are more deeply religious than even the people of countries like Ireland and Poland, where religion has been the core of national identity differentiating them from their traditional British, German, and Russian antagonists.

Third, the 1990–93 World Values Survey asked nine questions concerning religiosity in 41 countries. Overall these data show the United States to be one of the most religious countries in the world. Most striking is the high religiosity of America in comparison to other Protestant countries. The top 15 religious countries include Nigeria, India, and Turkey (the only African and predominantly Hindu and Muslim countries in the sample), eight predominantly Catholic countries, one Orthodox country (Romania), sharply divided Northern Ireland, and two predominantly Protestant countries, the United States in fifth place and Canada in fifteenth place. Except for Iceland, all the other predominantly Protestant countries fall well into the lower half of those surveyed. America is thus by a large margin the most religious Protestant country.

Along with their general religiosity, the Christianity of Americans has also impressed foreign observers. "There is no country in the world," Tocqueville said, "where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America." Christianity, Bryce similarly observed, is "the national religion" of Americans. Americans have also affirmed their Christian identity. "We are a Christian people," the Supreme Court declared in 1811. The Senate Judiciary Committee echoed these words exactly in 1853, adding that "almost our entire population belong to or sympathize with some one of the Christian denominations." In the midst of the Civil War, Lincoln also described Americans as "a Christian people." In 1892 the Supreme Court again declared, "This is a Christian nation." In 1908, a House of Representatives committee said that "the best and only reliance for the perpetuation of the republican institution is upon a Christian patriotism." In 1917 Congress passed legislation declaring a day of prayer in support of the war effort and invoking America's status as a Christian nation. In 1931 the Supreme Court reaffirmed its earlier view: "We are a Christian people, according to one another the equal right of religious freedom, and acknowledging with reverence the duty of obedience to the will of God."

While the balance between Protestants and Catholics shifted over the years, the proportion of Americans identifying themselves as Christian has remained relatively constant. In three surveys between 1989 and 1996, between 84 and 88 percent of Americans said they were Christians. The proportion of Christians in America rivals or exceeds the proportion of Jews in Israel, of Muslims in Egypt, of Hindus in India, and of Orthodox believers in Russia.

America's Christian identity has, nonetheless, been questioned on two grounds. First, it is argued that America is losing that identity because non-Christian religions are expanding in numbers, and Americans are thus becoming a multireligious and not simply a multidenominational people. Second, it is argued that Americans are losing their religious identity and are becoming secular, atheistic, materialistic, and indifferent to their religious heritage. Neither of these propositions comes close to the truth.

The argument that America is losing its Christian identity due to the spread of non-Christian religions was advanced by several scholars in the 1980s and 1990s. They pointed to the growing numbers of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and Buddhists in American society. Hindus in America increased from 70,000 in 1977 to 800,000 in 1997. Muslims amounted to at least 3.5 million in 1997, while Buddhists numbered somewhere between 750,000 and 2 million. From these developments, the proponents of de-Christianization argue, in the words of Professor Diana Eck, that "religious diversity" has "shattered the paradigm of America" as an overwhelmingly Christian country with a small Jewish minority. Another scholar suggested that public holidays should be adjusted to accommodate this increasing religious diversity and that, for a start, it would be desirable to "have one Christian holiday (say, Christmas), but replace Easter and Thanksgiving with a Muslim and Jewish holiday." In some measure, however, the holiday trend was in the opposite direction. Hanukkah, "traditionally a minor Jewish holiday," has, according to Professor Jeff Spinner, been elevated into the "Jewish Christmas" and displaced Purim as a holiday, so as "to fit in better with the dominant culture."

The increases in the membership of some non-Christian religions have not, to put it mildly, had any significant effect on America's Christian identity. As a result of assimilation, low birth rates, and intermarriage, the proportion of Jews dropped from 4 percent in the 1920s to 3 percent in the 1950s to slightly over 2 percent in 1997. If the absolute numbers claimed by their spokesmen are correct, by 1997 about 1.5 percent of Americans were Muslim, while Hindus and Buddhists were each less than one percent. The numbers of non-Christian, non-Jewish believers undoubtedly will continue to grow, but for years to come they will remain extremely small. Some increases in the membership of non-Christian religions come from conversions, but the largest share is from immigration and high birth rates. The immigrants of these religions, however, are far outnumbered by the huge numbers of immigrants from Latin America and the Philippines, almost all of whom are Catholic and also have high birth rates. Latin American immigrants are also converting to evangelical Protestantism. In addition, Christians in Asia and the Middle East have been more likely than non-Christians to migrate to America. As of 1990, a majority of Asian Americans were Christian rather than Buddhist or Hindu. Among Korean Americans, Christians outnumber Buddhists by at least ten to one. Roughly one third of Vietnamese immigrants are Catholics. About two thirds of Arab Americans have been Christian rather than Muslim, although the number of Muslims was growing

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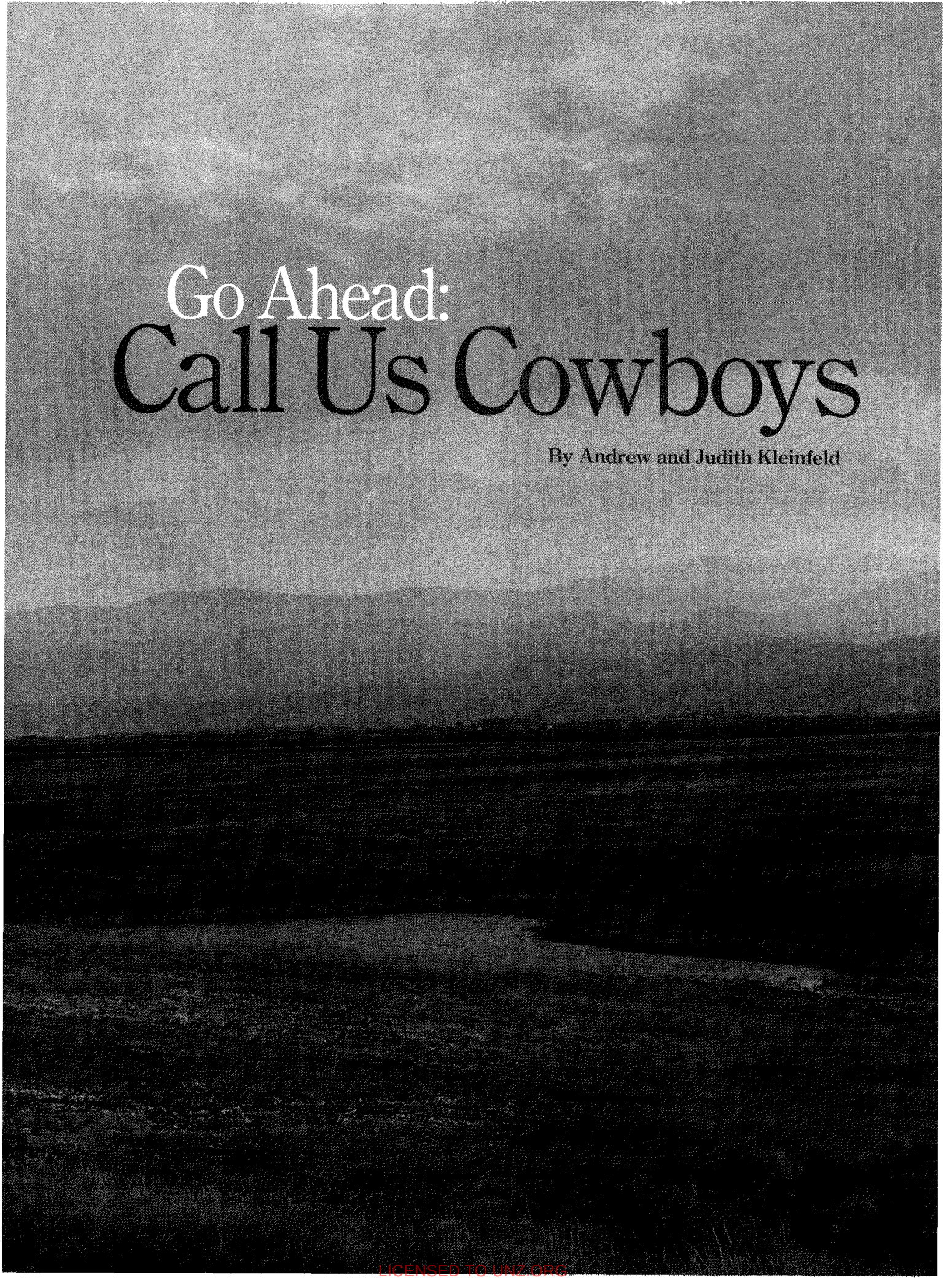

Go Ahead: Call Us Cowboys

By Andrew and Judith Kleinfeld

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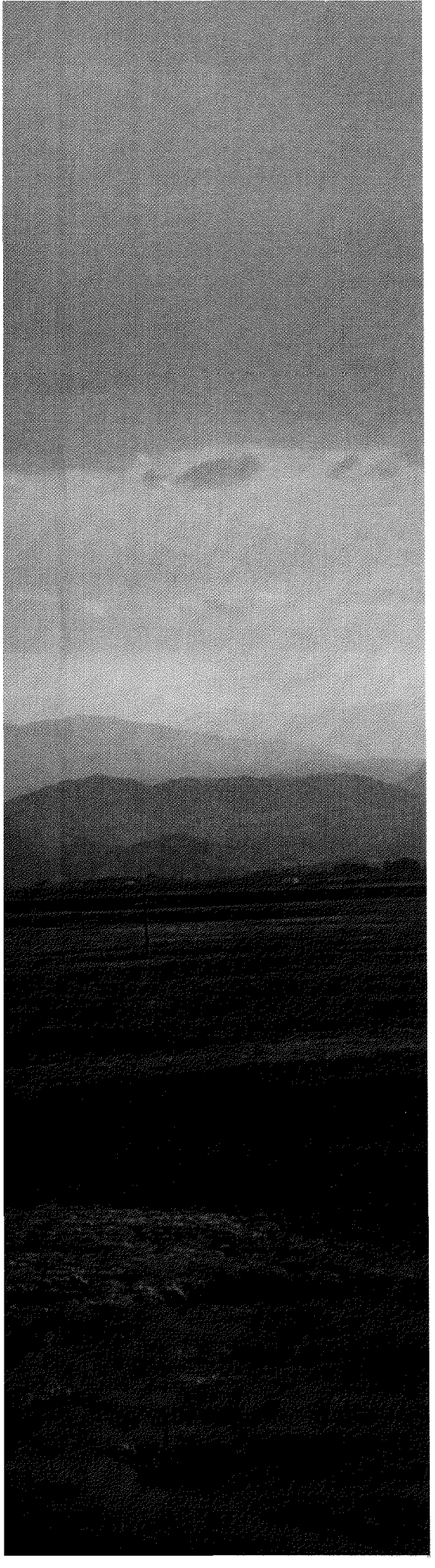

Everywhere, Americans are called "cowboys." On foreign tongues, the reference to America's western rural laborers is an insult. Cowboys, we are told, plundered the earth, arrogantly rode roughshod over neighbors, and were addicted to mindless violence. So some of us hang our heads in shame. We shouldn't. The cowboy is in fact our Homeric hero, an archetype that sticks because there's truth in it.

Cowboys were of course Plains men—Midwesterners operating from Texas to Kansas to the Dakotas. But their ideas and ideals spread across the continent to our Mountain West as well, even as far as the Alaskan West.

A few years ago, a Canadian anthropologist explained to us how different her countrymen are from Americans. She had a perfect comparison to illustrate this. She suggested that we go to the extreme western edge of Canada and have a look at two small towns named Stewart and Hyder. Stewart is situated in British Columbia, Hyder at the southeastern tip of Alaska. Though just two miles apart, these towns are very different in their "habits of the heart." If we visited them, our anthropologist friend implied, we would immediately understand the superiority of Canadian culture.

We decided to take up her challenge.

First we called up the respective town authorities. Hyder, the American town, turned out to have no town authorities—and, technically, no town. The Hyderites chose not to incorporate as a municipality, creating instead a community association—a private nonprofit corporation. Stewart, the Canadian town, is a real municipality with a traditional government.

When we phoned Stewart, the government agent refused to answer any questions until they were submitted in writing. The Hyder community association representative said, sure, she'd tell us anything we wanted to know, right now, on the phone. But to make it a fair comparison, we faxed written questions to both parties, and got written answers back.

The Canadian government official, evidently aspiring to create a faceless bureaucracy in this 700-person outpost, signed the response as "Government Agent"—capital letters but no name or sex—and explained that Stewart had a "Municipal Government incorporated under the laws of the Province of British Columbia," with a mayor and a city council of six members. As to Stewart's nearby neighbors, Government Agent from Canada said diplomatically, "I'm not sure how Hyder is governed," but expressed polite disapproval of its apparent libertarian streak.

Stewart developed very early into a regulated community, explained Government Agent, while Hyder chose to follow the path of less community and more personal freedom. Hyder is a collection of individuals first and a community second, while Stewart has a "community first" attitude, according to Government Agent. "We are generally more accepting of government's involvement in our day-to-day lives."

The Hyder representative—definitely not a Government Agent—signed her name, Caroline Gutierez, to her answers, which she sent on her personal stationery advertising her several businesses. She runs Boundary Gallery, where she is proprietor as well as artist, and Wood Bee Lumber Enterprise, as well as filling eight community positions ranging from music teacher to curator of the town museum. "I came with my family to Hyder on a summer vacation and am pleased to say I am still on vacation," Gutierez said. She applauded the very same cowboy attitudes that Government Agent disdained. Hyder, she said, was "spirited, rebellious, and independent," while Stewart was "cautious and cleaving to Mother England."

Andrew Kleinfeld is circuit judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Judith Kleinfeld is director of the Northern Studies Program at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

Karl Zinsmeister

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The differences in these answers were interesting enough to convince us to undertake a three-day, 1,200-mile drive from our home in Fairbanks. We arrived first at Stewart, Canada, an orderly, well-kept town with paved streets. Then we drove off the blacktop into Hyder, USA—a melange of disorder where at dark we could find little but a raunchy looking bar and lodge. We stayed on the Canadian side, at the King Edward Hotel. At our lace-and-doilies Stewart breakfast spot, we found a promotional map. It showed that Stewart had a neat grid of streets and municipal facilities, but not much else. Hyder, on the other hand, with about one seventh the population and no straight or paved roads at all, had 23 business and community enterprises.

Driving back and forth in daylight, our initial impressions of Stewart as solid and prosperous, Hyder as wild and ramshackle, turned completely inside out. Stewart is definitely much more attractive and inviting, with sidewalks, flower boxes, and bicycles to borrow for free at the well-staffed government tourist office. But Hyder was the confident, prosperous community. Stewart's houses needed paint. Its shops needed tourists. Its roads needed traffic. It was a semi-ghost town, bravely struggling on. With mining and logging drying up (environmentalist-orchestrated bans on logging in the Tongass National Forest and the closing of Ketchikan's pulp mill devastated the lumber economy in this region), many of Stewart's businesses, elegant restaurants, and small tourist attractions (e.g., the world's leading toaster museum) had discreet "For Sale" signs in the windows.

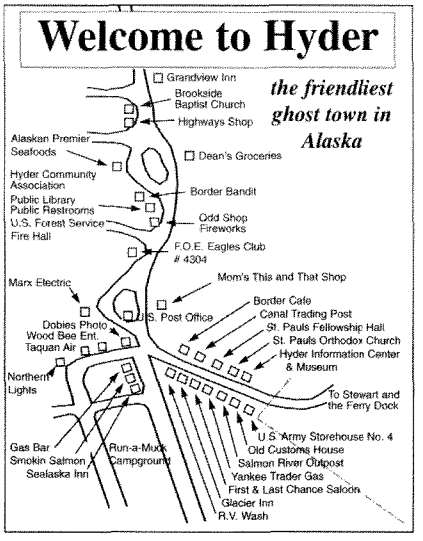
Hyder, meanwhile, turned out to be a lot more productive and enterprising than it had looked at dusk. The Hyderites had evidently found other ways to make money when the mines and mills were shut down. The pickup trucks in Hyder were newer and better, and there were a lot more satellite dishes.

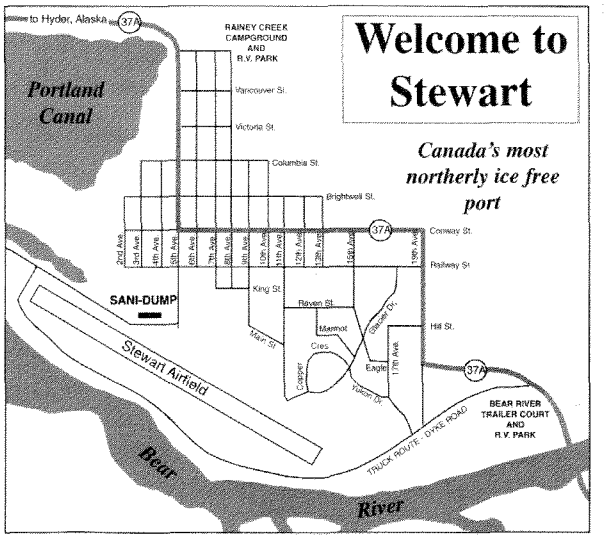
The best restaurant in the Hyder-Stewart metropolitan area, we discovered, was an old schoolbus and tent in Hyder serving fresh fish. The proprietor had traded a snowmobile for the bus, gutted it, turned it into a kitchen, and served halibut and charcoal-grilled salmon supplied by local fishermen. She had the highest prices in town, yet her restaurant was the only one with lines.

Hyder's most visible business (aside from the bar) was the "Border Bandit Discount Store." Between two giant American flags, this emporium expressed the town's style on its sign:

HYDER ALASKA—A TOWN OF ABOUT A HUNDRED HAPPY PEOPLE AND A FEW OLD S---HEADS.

DISCOUNT TOBACCO
TAX FREE BED & BREAKFAST
TAX FREE STOREBOAT RENTAL
CUSTOM IMPORTING
PAWN, BUY, SELL, GOLD
SPORTING GOODS GUNS & AMMO
MARINE SUPPLIES
INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS
ALMOST ANYTHING ELSE





We chatted with a Hyder resident (retired, so he had time to talk) who was definitely among the HUNDRED HAPPY PEOPLE. He'd built a $2 million business in this tiny frontier town from such enterprises as selling discount appliances and charging $25 in Hyder for a carton of cigarettes that costs $50 in Stewart. People drove to his store from all over northern British Columbia and the Yukon. Hyderites, he explained, made money on "everything that's legal or close to it."

Doubtless the academics would say that Hyder illustrates the immorality of markets and the lamentable limitations of sovereignty, which prevented Canada from imposing its higher taxes and fewer commercial freedoms so close to its borders. A case history of the commercial anarchy that results from lack of government.

There was no arguing the lack of government. Not only is there no municipality in Hyder, but no border station either. Once there had been one, but the Hyderites had protested the nuisance of having to stop when they drove back and forth. And after all, no such municipality as Hyder exists—a nonexistent place doesn't need a border station.

Stewart, on the other hand, has a well-maintained government border station with numerous polite and apologetic employees staffing three shifts. Each time our Jeep passed back and forth between the two towns we answered the same litany of questions to people who quickly got to know us and our answers. We asked one of the Canadian border guards what Hyderites were like. "Free spirits. Wild. They have guns, you know." We were asked if we had any guns each time we drove back to Stewart, since handguns (a near-universal in Alaskan bear country) are contraband in Canada.

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We made this trip in the first week of July. The "Canada Day" celebrations that took place in Stewart on July 1 were very vanilla. They included a "jaws of life" rescue equipment demonstration, a Name the Babies Contest, and the Annual Community Potluck Dinner in the early evening.

Critics disdainful of America often interpret our spiritedness as aggression or greed.

Three days later on July 4, Hyder spiced its national celebration with dashes of politically incorrect cayenne. There was an Ugly Vehicle Contest featuring pickups held together with duct tape and decorated with moose antlers (unlike the shiny ones in the driveways). There were parades of children with pets, toy guns, and cowboy costumes. There was a Wilderness Woman Contest. Contestants raced to split wood, wash clothes, shoot a bear, flip pancakes, change a baby, and put on lipstick. The winner did it all barefoot.

Even Hyderites recognize their limits—in an earlier year's self-staged July 4 fireworks display, they had accidentally burned down their fire hall with the fire engine inside. So this year Hyder hired Canadian experts to stage the pyrotechnics. The show started around midnight, during the late evening barbecue. Stewart residents courteously joined in the fun, bringing new government trucks and a poodle.

The people of Hyder and Stewart are not nearly so different as they make themselves seem. They're friends, they go back and forth frequently, and they do a lot of the same kinds of work. It's not so much that they are different as individuals as that they choose to be different as communities.

The enterprising and economically productive Hyderites pretend they're just fooling around. Hyder's most available T-shirt shows a logger with red suspenders and a bottle of something warming, and the slogan "I've been Hyderized." The Stewartites pretend they're upright Victorians. Their most featured T-shirts display the official seal of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

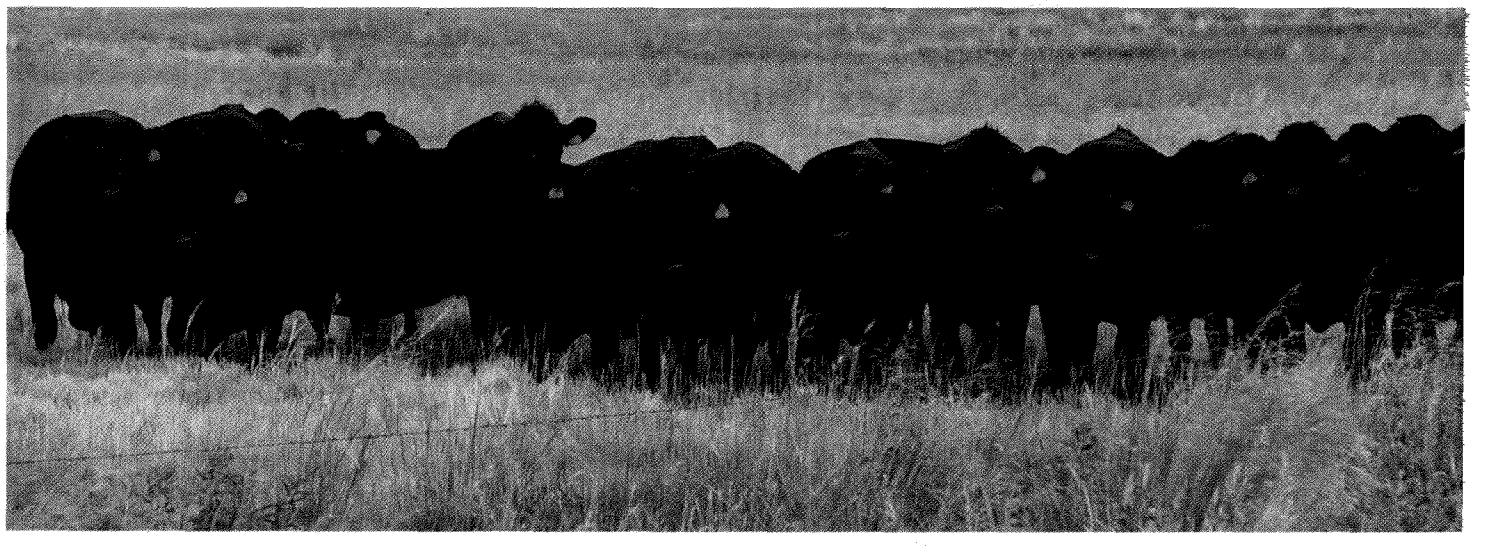
It is striking how people doing exactly the same thing can portray their activities to themselves in opposite ways. Different cultural spectacles affect what citizens see and feel. In Stewart and Hyder, people mostly seek the same thing from government—money. Stewart needs jobs, and so welcomes all the customs officers and government officials and employees it can get.

Hyder also got government funding—for a 73,000 square foot water-bottling plant on one of its mud roads, to sell "Alaska Glacier Blue" water from a glacier. The plant is expected to employ 40 people (not bad for a town of 100). But the people of Hyder didn't interpret their public funding as Canadians would have. The Americans saw themselves as independent and self-reliant people taking something from their government. The Hyderites saw the water-bottling plant as clear evidence of their aggressive enterprise and ability to get what they wanted through hard work together. The Canadians, on the other hand, generally see themselves as dependents of government, as sometimes grateful but sometimes resentful receivers of government alms.

Canadian sociologist Kaspar Naegele compares his country and the U.S. this way: "In Canada there seems to be greater acceptance of *limitation*, of hierarchical patterns. There seems to be less optimism, less faith in the future, less willingness to risk capital or reputation." American sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset concludes that Canada is a "more law-abiding, statist, and collectivity-oriented society" than the United States.

If we made a checklist of objective facts about a desirable place to live, Stewart would probably come out ahead. The Canadian way has virtues—clean paved streets, free medical care, a border station with a government presence, free bicycles. We had, after all, chosen to stay in Stewart, not Hyder. The American way, on the other hand, celebrates wildness. It celebrates common people and tolerates vulgarity. It is less interested in reprimanding iconoclasts.

But when we reacted to these two towns emotionally, instead of with checklists, Canada left us feeling flat and constrained. It was nice, but it wasn't us. When we crossed the border a couple



Karl Zinsmeister

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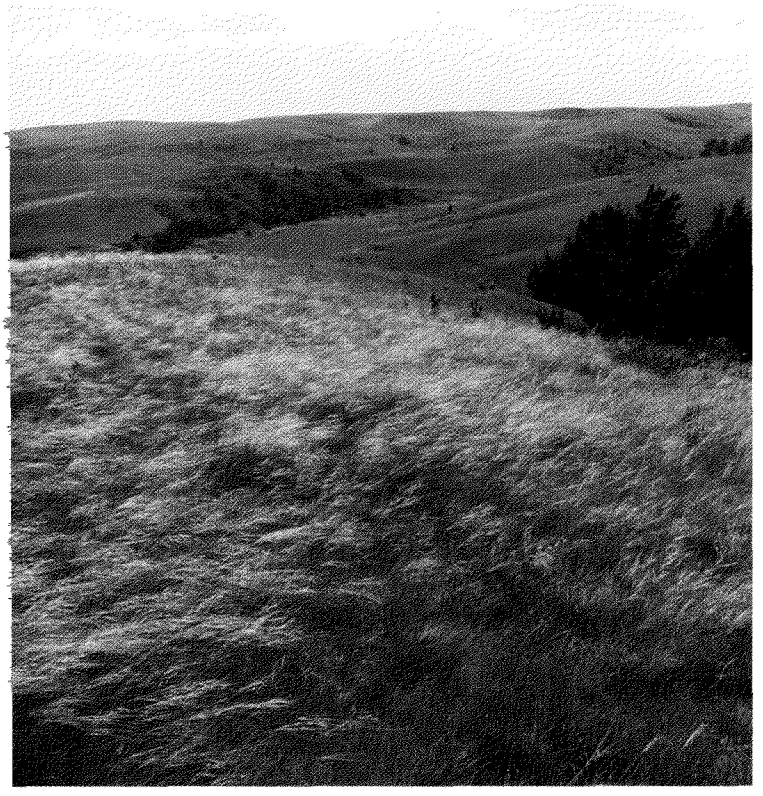
of days later, out of the calm Canadian dusk into American neon lights, Joshua, our Yale philosophy major son put his finger on our collective feelings. "America is *thumos*," he said. *Thumos,* an ancient Greek psychological concept, cannot be translated directly into English because it combines the qualities and emotions of passion, spirit, energy, and courage. *Thumos* has a negative side—the anger of Achilles, or the Hyderites' reckless burning down of their own firehouse. But it is also a creative force of great and positive life powers.

Contestants raced to split wood, wash clothes, shoot a bear, flip pancakes, change a baby, and put on lipstick.

Cowboys, venture capitalists, brilliant scientists, businesspeople like Bill Gates or Carly Fiorina, warriors like George S. Patton—have *thumos*. Modern people often ignore the role of "spiritedness." Psychologists measure intelligence, attitudes, emotions, and values, but spiritedness is not a category of much academic interest. For ancient people, in contrast, spiritedness was central to an understanding of a society and the individual psyche. Socrates divided the soul into three parts: reason, spiritedness (*thumos*), and appetite. Critics disdainful of America today often mischaracterize as aggressive or greedy "appetite" what should more accurately be interpreted as "spiritedness."



The role of freedom in creating prosperity has been the central discovery of economics over the past two centuries. What still tends to go unappreciated is that individual freedom has an emotional and spiritual value at least as important as its economic value. When one's activities are freely chosen and freely pursued, they create pleasure in themselves, not just through what is produced. That's why Caroline Gutierez of Hyder saw herself as "still on vacation" despite her two businesses and eight volunteer positions.

Americans enjoy the emotions freely chosen activities bring. We enjoy the autonomy and sense of authenticity, the exhilaration, the "wind in your hair" feeling of motion and freedom.

For centuries those describing our social character have identified exuberant energy and spiritedness as the most distinctive trait among Americans. "The place is so alive." "It makes you feel you can do so much more." These are common expressions among visiting observers of all ideologies.

Some individuals do not care for highly spirited people. There are quite a few American characteristics that seem unpleasant to people with different definitions of virtue. People who have a strong taste for order and hierarchy, who enjoy calm and quiet and leisure, who prefer security to risk, who take aesthetic pleasure in simplicity rather than in the bustling variety of human commerce—such people are not likely to enjoy America much. The British painter John Butler Yeats (the poet's father) spent 15 years trying to be an American. "A sort of European old-maidishness gets between me and them," he mourned. "Depend upon it, it is a mistake sometimes to have been too well brought up."

America's *thumos* appears most often in our pursuit of enterprise. The ancient passions for bravery in battle have reappeared in our prosaic, commercial culture. Tocqueville was quite taken with the American style of building lower-quality sailing ships, then taking over ocean commerce by sailing more of them faster, heedless of the risk of shipwreck, so that shipping could be cheaper. "Americans put a sort of heroism into their manner of doing commerce," he noted.

The place where America's national legends have been acted out has been our Western frontier. Even as the frontier has moved, we continue to use its imagery to describe ourselves, as when we refer to "homesteading on the electronic frontier." America's critics also favor Western and frontier imagery to describe us, as in the disdainful European references to "cowboys."

In every language in which we have tested this, "frontier" means something nearly opposite to its American sense. The French Larousse gives only one meaning for "*frontière*," and that is the border between two nations—which in an oft-invaded country like France conjures up danger rather than opportunity. In Mandarin Chinese the term is *bian jie* or "boundary." In Cantonese, the word for frontier is *huang di*, which carries a negative connotation of "wilderness" or "wasteland." A frontier is a barren hardship post, not a place of opportunities, explains a Chinese colleague.

Russians have a very similar attitude toward frontiers. A Russian who discovered that one of these authors maintains his judicial chambers in Alaska blurted out, "Why were you sent?" The idea that there might be appeal in an assignment on America's

Left and right: Karl Zinsmeister

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Alaskan frontier seemed incomprehensible to him.

During America's expansion west, "frontier" transformed into the very opposite of a boundary or limit. Its primary meaning in American English came to be a "boundless realm of possibility." Indeed some foreign dictionaries call this meaning of "frontier" an "Americanism."

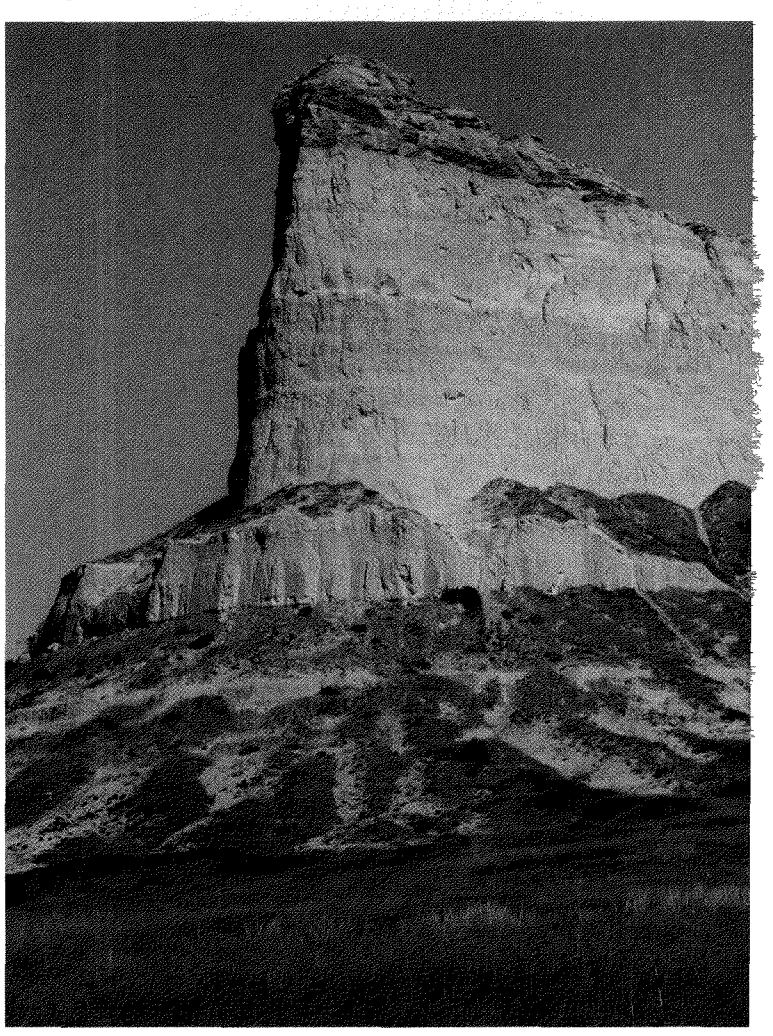
The attractiveness of frontiers to Americans is demonstrated by our much more frequent use of the word. When we recently counted usages of the word "frontier" in business names in a number of different countries, we found that Americans use "frontier" in business names four times more often than the French, 15 times as often as the British, and 25 times more than the Argentines. And these numbers understate the national differences, because in other countries "frontier" is often used in reference to a business on the border (e.g., "State Line Liquor") to advertise businesses that leverage cross-border tax or regulatory differences.

Americans have many symbols of the Western frontier—mountain man, pioneer woman, homesteader, prospector—but our main symbol of the frontier is the cowboy. Hardly anyone needs stirrup-friendly, pointy-toed boots for their daily chores anymore, but plenty of people buy them. The cowboy best encapsulates the emotion, hostility, and fantasy of American independence.

Though detractors Marxify the cowboy into some sort of violent capitalist, the "Western" fable was actually a rebuke to the "Gilded Age." Americans did not choose as their heroes of song and image the men who financed the railroads and endowed the libraries. The Plains hero of Owen Wister's novel, *The Virginian* (a favorite of Theodore Roosevelt), had no property, no schooling, no social standing, no money, and no interest in getting these things. What gave him pride was his courage, competence, self-discipline, self-reliance, physical prowess, and most of all integrity and sense of justice. The cowboy, an impoverished hired hand who slept in bunkhouses or on the ground, was a figure of aristocratic honor. As Wister put it, "If he gave his word, he kept it; Wall Street would have found him behind the times." The cowboy was a knight, albeit one with no land or money.

High Noon portrayed a sheriff who, unable to get any of the townsmen to stand with him against brutal thugs taking over their remote town, faced them down alone, and survived only because his Quaker wife picked up a gun and sacrificed her abstract pacifism to the concrete virtue that the hero represented. *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* presented John Wayne as a military hero who, through great courage and skill, prevented an Indian war. In *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*, Jimmy Stewart played a lawyer who had no skill with a gun, happily wore an apron, and dried the dishes in the kitchen until he was forced by a sense of honor and justice to confront the villain who ruled the town by brute force. *Shane* told the story of a brave man who wanted peace but risked his life to protect homesteaders from the men who were destroying them. In all the classic Westerns the hero, by dint of great courage and competence, fights alone for justice, achieves it, and leaves without riches or fame, with nothing but honor.

Because the cowboy melded the aristocratic virtues of honor and indifference to material things with the democratic values of self-reliance, discipline, and independence, this myth appealed deeply to our national character. Freedom imposes burdens—isolation, inequality, and anxiety about whether our choices are wise. The cowboy ideal stimulates in us the vigor to attempt difficult new tasks.



When foreigners see us as cowboys, they are not mistaken. As a people, we still exhibit a high degree of courage, independence, aggressiveness, competence, and spirit. Diplomatic Europeans have responded to tyranny over the latest century mostly with accommodation, like the townspeople in *High Noon*. Cowboy Americans, on the other hand, have hungered to confront and defeat tyrants, in real life as in legend. Our Western experience—love of freedom, little deference to wealth and status, an idealistic drive for justice, and a willingness to be ferocious toward these ends—continues to drive much of what is best about America.

So can they call us cowboys? You bet. Because we are. Our response ought to be that of the Virginian when he was described as a son of a bitch: "When you call me that, *smile*!"

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A Rich Boyhood in the Plain Void

By James Lileks

It's October 1965 in Fargo, North Dakota, and I'm wearing a plaid plastic windbreaker with scratchy elastic. I have a red wagon. The handle bites my hand if I hold it tightly; they didn't plane everything smooth back then—who'd sue? I load the wagon with bags of apples gathered from the backyard tree. One sack, one dozen, one dollar. Who first? The Hermans across the street, perhaps; Mr. H. worked for a bank, and was therefore rich as Mr. Mooney. On their left flank were *Mormons*, and that was a wild card. They didn't watch TV, which was scary weird. They went to church on Saturdays, which was just wrong. Their grandma yelled at me last summer for riding a girl's bike. Apparently that was indecent in ways I could not possibly understand. Did they believe in apples? The house three doors down was occupied by a nice lady who had a son but no dad. (He was always at work, maybe. I mean, *everyone* had a dad.)

This was my territory. Zoom up to see the terrain in context: two blocks to the south, the State Fairgrounds. A few months before, I'd sat on the steps in the buttery light of late summer and heard the screams from the Midway. You could see the Ferris wheel plough the sky from our lawn. Turning right from our driveway, Northport Shopping Center, a postwar strip mall that had everything you'd ever want in the world—candy, pet turtles, Big Daddy Roth model car kits. Zoom up some more and you passed the edge of town. Nothing for a hundred miles in any direction.

Home, all of it. Standing in the driveway with a wagon full of apples, I thought I was poised at the edge of a fine adventure. I was

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I grew up in a safe sane place with parents who loved me. Blame Fargo.

on my own; no parent hung behind to make sure I wasn't scooped up by a molester. I wouldn't be dunning my neighbors with the suggestion that they help my soccer club. We didn't have soccer. We'd never heard of soccer. Who'd kick a ball when you could hit it with a bat? You can take an apple from the wagon, toss it in the air, and knock it out of town. Anything's possible. Now hit up your neighbors, and turn the backyard produce into greenbacks. That Lego expansion kit won't buy itself. Look, Mom's watching from the window—give her a cursory wave, and head off. Otherwise you'll miss cartoons.

And now, the Ironic Twist: *There is absolutely no ironic twist.*

This is the point in the narrative where the Grim Truth usually gets dragged out—the kindly neighbor was a Kluxer, the childless family next door had lost a son in a threshing accident, the fair burned down, the apples were infested with Burmese mealworms, Dad pawned his WWII medals to buy the apple tree seeds, etc. Sorry, not so. I had a Norman Rockwell childhood. Blame Fargo. I grew up in a safe sane place with parents who loved me. Sometimes a picture of a kid standing in the driveway with a wagon full of apples is just that—a good and hopeful thing in a good and hopeful place.

But you don't get dates with the snarky girls in college unless you find the Dark Side. There has to be something amusing and contemptible about this tableau; there has to be a payoff. You can't just be a little apple vendor heading into the golden light of autumn. Where's the painful personal conflict? Where's the bittersweet ambiguity, for heaven's sake? How can anyone be suitably complex when he's born in a Capra set?

For many years I looked down on Fargo, and found my big city peers agreeing. Why, the very word brayed provincial cluelessness. It was part of the American lexicon of two-syllable dunderheaded dullness. Fargo. Edsel. Nixon. I left at the earliest possible opportunity. Once free, I never made a secret of being a North Dakotan, but I used it to get praise from the clever crowd. *You crawled out of that rude clay? Yet you're so worldly. You know history, you know art!* I shrugged; one did what one could.

Gaah. What an insufferable twit I was! I had no idea how lucky I'd been to grow up in Fargo, to be dropped in the middle of this continent in the middle of that century. This is my apology to Fargo, and to North Dakota.

Fargo was always more than Fargo. It's Moorhead, the city across the river in Minnesota that has no reason to exist except, perhaps, as a cautionary example. (Minnesota had higher taxes than North Dakota, and you could see the result: robust health in Fargo, years of slump-shouldered economic ennui in Moorhead.) Fargo is also West Fargo, a name that strikes the outsider as absurd—you have one Fargo, why would you need *another*? Is West Fargo your emergency spare backup, perhaps? For decades West Fargo was the smelly end of town, home to slaughterhouses that sundered and shipped our fine Angus beef. The high school sports teams are still called the Packers.

Then a funny thing happened to Fargo during the 1980s and '90s—the area started booming and never found a reason to stop. As the rest of North Dakota emptied out, people came to Fargo for the clean-fingernails jobs: insurance, hospitals, banking. Some software, some manufacturing. The shopping streets were no longer choked with slow-moving farmers coming in for provisions. Fargo no longer existed to serve the rural outskirts. Fargo was there for Fargo's sake.

The city couldn't go east; the Red River scribbled a thin but impassible border. It could go north, but the sewage treatment plant and the airport made that less palatable. It couldn't go west—beyond there be Packers. So it went south. When I left in 1976, the town petered out around 20th Street South. It has now marched 40 blocks beyond that. Fargo today is more—but also less—than the Fargo I knew.

That's always the case. Always worse and always better. But Fargo had more to lose. Some small Midwestern towns can be killed with a single shot—move the train, or run an interstate a mile south, or close up the grain depot and that's The End. Larger prairie towns can ride out the changes, but they always lose their downtowns to Wal-Marts and malls. So it was with Fargo. On August 3, 1973, West Acres mall opened. Sears on one end, DeLendrecie's department store on the other. A movie theater with two screens. *Two.* You could have painted yourself pink and run naked around downtown that day; no one would have noticed.

The major merchants moved from downtown, one at a time. When Penney's relocated, the old store was razed and the plot replanted with grass—the retail equivalent of the Romans salting the earth. Downtown responded with the stoutest arrow in the Urban Theorist's quiver: the Pedestrian Mall. Old straight Broadway was ripped up and remade to twist and turn around an obstacle course of short concrete pillars. The sidewalks were covered with a smoked-glass canopy. The emptied department stores were gutted and turned into boutique hives—if West Acres offered movies, modern fashions and fast food, why, downtown would strike back with…candle shops! The Red River Mall, they called it. Set in the sidewalks were rectangular stones bearing the names of towns that grew up along the Red. They looked like tombstones.

Fargo had never been richer. And downtown was dead.

And I helped! Everyone did. Of course we wanted to shop indoors. What lunatic wants to scurry from store to store when it's sleeting cold thumbtacks? For my part, the appearance of West Acres coincided with the onset of adolescence, and the mall was where the girls were. Where they would have been otherwise, we could not imagine.

In the Sixties I got my hair cut in a hotel barbershop. There weren't any tot-specific stylists, or even stylists. There were barbershops, and they were downtown. Three stools, three

Left: Karl Zinsmeister

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men in white coats, *Esquire* on the table, the smell of hair tonic and Winstons heavy in the air. The Graver barber shop was run by a man named—I'm not kidding—Jim Crow. When I caught snippets of the network news I always wondered how the influence of my barber extended to election laws in the South. He had a big red padded board that sat on the armrests—that was the extent to which they accommodated children. Behind him, a pale blue jar of Barbicide, which sounded like some horrible crime, and a black-and-chrome metal hot-lather machine. Leather strops hung by each station. Straight-edge razors lined up on a towel. This sort of concentrated manliness was standard, unremarkable, and moms dropped their kids off here without a second thought.

The hotel lobby was right next door, and it seemed a worldly place; men sunk deep in chairs reading the paper, Gladstone bag at their feet like a patient dog. A bellman in a uniform; the occasional *ding!* of the front desk bell. The hotel was a portal to the world beyond Fargo, but I didn't need it. I had my own portal, and I could see it from the barber's chair—the Public Library across from the Graver, built during one of those spasms of self-improvement that struck small towns in their boisterous years. The cornice had the names of all the famous writers whose wisdom was presumably stored within—Shakespeare, Goethe, Longfellow, Emerson, Milton. (I would have added Appleton, the author of my beloved Tom Swift books.) Memories of the interior are confined to the creak of the floors, the hiss of the pipes in winter, the heavy musty perfume of old dead books. It was knocked down in the '60s during Fargo's earnest spasm of urban renewal, and replaced with an abstract sculpture. The view from the barber shop turned into an ugly heap of chains and cement balls.

Wouldn't you know it, Fargo finally catches up with the rest of the world just in time to experience the Era of Civic Grotesqueries.

In this respect Fargo was a typical Midwest small city. For years it had lived behind the curve. Styles took a while to make it to Fargo. It was as if there was some vast thick curtain somewhere between Chicago and our town, and only the hardiest trends could hurl themselves through its dampening atmosphere. We would read about trends, but never see them. Of course, there were reasons miniskirts didn't catch on—Lutheran probity and 20-below windchills, for instance. There's a reason the furniture stores weren't full of Eames chairs and brutal chrome end tables—the people who would buy those things went to fabled Minneapolis, where such daft ideas had a better chance of germinating. What we learned of the outside world came mostly from movies and music, but it wasn't part of Fargo culture.

This didn't mean that the Old Ways were nurtured and celebrated. Fargo always yearned to be modern, and this meant it treated its past with the usual disregard. Downtown had several movie theaters when I was growing up. The Fargo was the palace, an ornate space with a toothy Wurlitzer, gilded coves, thick purple drapes. There was the Grand, the Roxy, the Towne. I remember them all as cold dank empty boxes, their ornament stripped. The Towne had lightbulbs set in the ceiling to simulate stars; by the time I came along no more than three bulbs ever shone. The Grand turned into the Broadway, and showed nudie flicks—but once a year it would show a Disney film, almost as an act of contrition, and you'd find yourself watching *Fantasia* with some rank old raincoated mopes wondering what the hell was going on here, anyway.

Fargo's city fathers met the challenge of the '60s strip mall by constructing civic monuments that would bring people back downtown to bask in the progressive emanations of modernist architecture. They built a new library. A civic center. A Miesian city hall. In the middle of this rational tableau, though, they erected a tablet engraved with the Ten Commandments.

It worked, for a while. Downtown was still where the Elks met. That's where the post office was. That's where the department stores with their grand Christmas displays were. That's where the park was. Oh, you had small swaths of green here and there. But downtown Broadway rolled down a small hill (the only one in North Dakota, we joked; folks came from miles around to see it) and flowed into the great green expanse of Island Park. It was studded with monuments—a Grand Army of the Republic memorial greeted you as you entered; a contemplative Norwegian politician stood in a flower garden. There was, and is, a tidy gazebo whose plaque says simply "Dedicated to Music." The WPA built a swimming pool and ice rink in the classic 1930s concrete-modern style. This was Fargo in a way no other place could be.

Every downtown has its signature building, put up by a local moneybags erecting for the ages, who is forgotten in two generations. Fargo had the Black Building. The Blacks were an important family with solid roots, and my mom liked to shop at their store. When the Blacks built their Big Statement in 1930, they gave Fargo its first *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* entry: *The Black Building in Fargo is actually white! Believe it or NOT!* Ten stories of sleek simple modernism. You could imagine Superman working here. It would be the tallest building for decades.

When a 22-story building was constructed downtown, I was 14, but even then I saw that something was wrong. The Black Building was an office tower. The new tallest building was an old-folks home.

The last time I visited Fargo, I went back to City Hall because I had a suspicion that the Ten Commandments tablets would be gone soon. They're still there, but the court battles rage. They looked naked and alone. They know what's coming. There is still a model of the *USS Fargo* at the library; no one yet has protested this symbol of phallocentric militarism so close to the children's section. Yet.

The civic center where I saw the Shrine Circus, then the Harlem Globetrotters, then the Blue Oyster Cult, had been remodeled beyond recognition. The building where I went at age 14 to speak in a civic meeting for Public Broadcasting is slated for demolition.

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But amidst the change, a surprise: Downtown has come to life again. The Fargo Theater has been lavishly renovated. The Red River Mall was torn up, the trees uprooted, the leaky canopies removed. You can park on Broadway again. The old train stations have been put to new uses. It's not exactly Soho, but it has a pulse and a charm.

What an insufferable twit I was! I had no idea how lucky I'd been to grow up in the middle of this continent.

Every time I go home, I visit the old DeLendrecie's department store, an 1889 structure now converted to offices. When I was a young boy, a trip to DeLendrecie's was part of the Saturday drill. You went downtown with mom. Sometimes you got the haircut. Sometimes you'd go to Daveau's to get sheet music for your piano lessons. Sometimes you'd go to Woolworth's, which was always a treat—the store smelled of grilled cheese and mothballs and parakeets, and it had an escalator. You'd hold on to this ridged metal tube that felt like a spinal cord; you'd time your jump at the top so the teeth didn't chew you up like that one kid you'd heard about. (Everyone knew about the kid who was eaten by the Woolworth escalator.) And then you'd go to mom's favorite store, DeLendrecie's.

Cosmetics on the main floor, a mezzanine above, the hiss and thump of a message arriving via pneumatic tube. Downstairs was a small restaurant with a black-and-chrome counter (made by the same company that made the barbershop lather dispenser, you suspected). Going downtown with mom, having a soda at the counter, spinning around on the stool until you were green—you felt as if you were part of the adult world in a way you simply cannot get in a shopping mall today. The adults didn't look like plus-size children. The women wore dresses, hats, hose, and heels; what few men were about in the store were either natty snappy clerks or fellas in suits from the bank or the insurance office. A trip downtown was a trip into the world of money and work, a world completely separate from your world of school and play.

People who grow up in big cities can never quite grasp the urbanity of places like Fargo. Manhattan is simply the apotheosis of miles and miles of compacted humanity; Fargo was an anomaly, a dense, self-contained world in the middle of an empty plain. The Black Building is more impressive than the Empire State, because five minutes from its front door there's simply no evidence that man matters at all. Ten minutes from the outskirts you're on the prairie. And then you're on your own.

You can't describe the vastness of the Panavision prairie to East Coasters. Either the idea bores them—*sorry, if there's not an all-night Thai take-out every ten blocks I am* so *not there.* Or it's incomprehensible—*what, a dirt ocean that just* sits *there?*

Yes. That's it. The earth is flat and the sky is big, and you're a small lone thing rolling between the two. True Midwesterners have no time for oceans—all that pointless motion. It comes in, it goes out. What's the point? True Midwesterners have no time for mountains. They're so obvious. They don't *do* anything. We have mountains, in a way; they're called clouds. And they move. Can yours do that?

No, we didn't spend all our time standing on the edge of a field, contemplating our place in the universe. But even if you never left town, you skirted the edge of the void all the time. Forty years ago Texaco built a station on the edge of West Fargo, the first gas station you'd see as you approached the great metropolis. My dad ran the station. The windows faced west; there was nothing across the road. You could see the cars coming an hour before they pulled up to the pump. He could walk out beyond the pumps, and he'd be standing at the thinnest tip of the nation's industrial capillaries—the station to his back, the high sign of the franchise creaking in the breeze overhead, the hot coin of the sun burying itself in the fields again. Heaven! Couldn't stay perfect forever, of course. It was torn down in 2000 and replaced with a newer model. Now my father has four times the window space. And there's *still* nothing across the road.

Fargo's gotten a little too crowded for dad, but he won't move. He lives where we all grew up. When I go back I still pull up to the same old classic postwar rambler with the faux-stone facade, push-button GE appliances, and blond-wood cabinets. I sleep in my old bed. The curtain pulls in my room are the 1962 originals. I take pictures of my toddler daughter on the steps where Mom photographed me in my apple-selling garb. And late at night sometimes I walk to Northport to the old grocery store. Last trip back I discovered that the store had decorated its walls with huge blown-up pictures of Fargo in the '50s. Great grainy pictures of treeless streets, new houses, Northport before I knew it. A shot of the original employees, the women cheerful and demure in neat smocks, the men in Buddy Holly glasses.

And I'm stunned: They've come around! Fargo understands! They have paused in their headlong rush to prosperity to gather about them the elements of their culture, the symbols of their civilization! Eh, it's just a grocery store's idea of good marketing. Retro sells. No one's standing here looking up at the pictures, marveling at the revelations.

But I came for bacon and juice, and I'd better get it. The store has changed since I grew up—twice the size, ten times the products. I wandered over to the produce aisle, and found fruits we didn't know existed back in the '60s. Kiwi? Who eats that—soccer players? Everything glistens. A dozen varieties of apples. Must be five hundred apples stacked up in the bins. Even now at midnight you'll find a few people by the apple bins, selecting the best.

And what if a kid should show up tomorrow at their door, dragging a wagon, selling the same sort of apple they could get at the store or pluck off the backyard tree? Would they buy?

It's Fargo. They'd buy a bag. Of *course* they would.

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A rancher's house amidst the wilds of the Flint Hills of Kansas.

Culture in Inner America

By Bill Kauffman

We came to North Dakota for baseball.

Fargo was a charter member (1902) of the Northern League, which in four incarnations has organized the American game in the Northern Plains. The 1908 Fargo team included Richard Brookins, the twentieth century's first black member of an integrated professional team, and before the third version of the Northern League folded in 1971, it had nurtured such black players as Hank Aaron, Lou Brock, and Willie Stargell.

Throughout the 1970s and '80s, the Northern Plains were invisible to the blinkered businessmen who run major league baseball. So in 1993, a fourth Northern League was born: an independent association whose "founders wanted to pump fresh air into an institution suffocated by rulers ever more distant from the game on the field," as Stefan Fatsis writes in *Wild and Outside*, his account of the league's rebirth. The Northern League would

TAE *contributing editor Bill Kauffman's latest book is* Dispatches from the Muckdog Gazette: A Mostly Affectionate Account of a Small Town's Fight to Survive.

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operate outside the stultifying confines of the major-league dominion. Teams might sell a player now and then to a major-league club, but Fargo, Sioux Falls, and the others would call their own shots rather than take orders from remote cities.

The Northern League cultivates a certain outlaw appeal. The most eccentric (and successful) franchise is in St. Paul, Minnesota. Owner Mike Veeck is the son of Bill Veeck, the legendary impresario of the St. Louis Browns who was best known for sending midget Eddie Gaedel to the plate as a pinch hitter in a 1951 game. Mike Veeck is no less cheekily impious: His promotions have included a reverse wave, in which thousands of fans sat simultaneously on whoopee cushions, and a St. Paul bobblehead giveaway in which the bobbling head belonged to Saint Paul.

The Fargo franchise plays in the modern but comfortable Newman Outdoor Field, whose dimensions are identical to those of Yankee Stadium. This in homage to native son Roger Maris, who played for Fargo before breaking Babe Ruth's home run record with the Yankees. Unlike Yankee Stadium, the action in Newman does not grind to a halt between innings so that the Great God Television can run three minutes of commercials.

We watch the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks and Winnipeg Goldeyes play on a lovely North Dakota night. A North Dakotan is on the mound, one of two homeboys on the RedHawks; general manager Lee Schwartz, a Fargo native, notes that they are solid players, not mere tokens.

Sucking on a Grain Belt premium as the RedHawks take a loss, I ponder the wistful conclusion of *The History of Independent Baseball Leagues, 1993-2002*, edited by Northern League pioneers David Kemp and Miles Wolff: "In ten years the league had undergone a remarkable transformation. Originally planned as a revival of the old Northern League in traditional league cities, the membership now had become composed of new stadia (St. Paul, built in the 1980s, was the oldest) in largely major urban markets."

"You can't make it on 400 fans a night," says Schwartz when I ask him if the decamping has robbed the league of its special character. There is always the danger—others might see it as a windfall—that the Northern League will be seduced into the major-minors system. But for now, the Northern League shines as an example of American Do-It-Yourselfism. Baseball is the birthright of all Americans, not just George Steinbrenner, Bob Costas, and feral millionaires who charge kids $20 an autograph. The game no more belongs to the American and National Leagues than our culture belongs to the American and National Broadcasting Companies.

Poet Dana Gioia writes of the "pervasive urban bias against agricultural areas," especially the "Great Plains states, which are seen as flat, characterless, and provincial." Yet pound for pound, North Dakota has a literary scene richer and more diverse by far than, say, Manhattan. Dakota literature takes in *sui generis* figures ranging from novelist Larry Woiwode, a Christian organic farmer; to Kathleen Norris, who writes essays on monasticism from the house she took over from her grandparents in Lemmon, South Dakota; to the poet and hog farmer Timothy Murphy.

Pound for pound, North Dakota has a literary scene richer and more diverse than Manhattan's.

As an infant in Hibbing, Minnesota, Murphy had his stroller pushed by an aspiring songwriter of the Iron Range named Bobby Zimmerman, or so goes family lore. Zimmerman left his cold northern square and became Dylan; Murphy went to Yale, where his mentor, Robert Penn Warren, urged him to "Go home, boy. Buy a farm. Sink your toes in that rich soil and grow some roots."

So Murphy returned, settling into his role as a gay "Eagle Scout Libertarian Factory Farmer Carnivore Poet." Places like North Dakota provide room for real idiosyncrasy. Next time you're in Manhattan, troll the "arts centers" looking for a Pro-Life Hetero Stay-at-Home Mom Poet.

North Dakota is a state of "Norwegians and Swedes and Germans and Germans and Germans!" said Harold Schafer, the Bismarck inventor who created "Mr. Bubble" bath soap. In 1910, 70 percent of its population was foreign-born or of foreign-born parentage, the highest such proportion in the United States. Politically, it has been the most radical state in the Union: anti-war and anti-big business. The prairie populists of the Non-Partisan League fitfully dominated the state between world wars; the North Dakota Senate voted to secede from the union in 1933—not entirely in whimsical protest. No heterodoxy was too much for North Dakotans to consider: They even abolished parking meters by state initiative.

The state's relative isolation within the U.S. was reflected in its politics. North Dakota was "the most isolationist" state, "the most consistent and vocal opponent of America's twentieth-century foreign policy," write historians Robert and Wynona Wilkins. After the Second World War, "North Dakota Republicans in Congress stood firm against restrictions on traditional American liberties," state the Wilkinses. "They fought universal military training.... They attempted to end the peacetime draft as inimical to liberty, and to check wire-tapping."

The "deep-seated populism" of North Dakota endures, says David Martinson, proprietor of Great Northern Books, an absolute gem of a regional bookstore in downtown Fargo. His state's curious electoral behavior—it elects Republicans locally but sends Democrats to Washington—may be explained by the traditional suspicion of East Coast capitalists, argues Martinson: "We don't trust national Republicans!" he laughs.

We walk from Great Northern Books, and what do I spy but the Quentin N. Burdick U.S. Courthouse. Verily, the pork barrel hath no shame.

I remember Senator Burdick from my days toiling within the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee. Burdick

Karl Zinsmeister

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was inert, aphasiac, with the heavy-lidded visage of a dull boy who expects to be asked a question he cannot answer. I once saw the Honorable Burdick browbeaten in a backroom by representatives from the billboard industry—not David Rockefeller and the Trilateralists, or the AARP or the NRA or NEA but the *billboard* industry!

Sometimes the apple falls from the tree and gets squashed. Listless Quentin Burdick's father was the independent-minded Republican Congressman Usher Burdick, Sioux-speaking former end on the University of Minnesota's Big Ten champs who fought for Ezra Pound's release from the nuthouse. Usher bequeathed Quentin a talent for football—the son was Bronco Nagurski's blocking back at the University of Minnesota—but none of his political imagination. Maverick genes, it seems, are hard to transmit.

So there we are, driving the gravel roads outside Clear Lake, Iowa, following directions like "first fencerow past the big grain bin." Finally we ditch the rental car and walk the narrow half-mile path between corn and soybean fields to the spot where on February 3, 1959, the plane carrying Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper crashed, a tragedy later mythicized by Don McLean in "American Pie" as "the day the music died." We find the cross and makeshift memorial to the three paleo rock 'n' rollers and belt out a reverent "Chantilly Lace."

If an Iowa farm is the place where the music died, Iowa writ large is also a place where much American music was born. In chapbooks of poetry and gleaming brass bands we find the seeds and pith and guts of a real American culture. And just 15 miles southeast of the soybean field that swallowed Buddy Holly we march into Mason City, Iowa, the "River City" immortalized in the great American musical *The Music Man*.

Music Man creator Meredith Willson checked into Mason City at 14 pounds, six ounces, making him the biggest baby born in Iowa as of 1902. Perhaps that superfluous second "L" in his surname accounted for the avoirdupois.

Meredith—who hated his forename as sissyish—was born to a Congregationalist Sunday school teaching mother and a real-estate lawyer father who had played baseball at Notre Dame and learned to throw a curveball from the inventor of that pitch, Candy Cummings. The family was not without those peculiarities often productive of an artistic temperament—mom was churchy and opinionated, dad a hard-to-please sourpuss—and yet the activities of Meredith's boyhood were classically Middle American: playing cowboys and Indians, raising white mice, operating a lemonade stand.

And the lad was mad for music. Other boys might wish to be Christy Mathewsen or, in cases of extreme derangement, Woodrow Wilson, but Meredith adulated John Philip Sousa. A Sousa talent scout discovered Willson in Mason City, and the boy would tour with the King of Martial Marches for three years before joining Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic.

Shrewdly, Willson bet on a new medium, becoming West Coast musical director of NBC Radio. He composed, he conducted, he engaged in dopey prattle with the stars, including George Burns and Gracie Allen. He also referred "to Mason City, Iowa, at every possible opportunity," as a New York critic complained. But in his pre-*Music Man* celebrity, Willson may have done Middle America more harm than good. He was the model of the genial wisecracking bandleader, a Severinson of the Grape Nehi age, making the poison pill of national radio and TV go down easily in the heartland.

Yet in his comfortable exile, Willson continued to dream of Iowa. He wrote marches, croon-tunes, and even the "Iowa Fight Song" for his home state. And in the late 1950s, after years of gestation, he came forth with *The Music Man*, his wise, warmhearted, funny, and enduring play about a con man who falls in love with the Iowa townspeople he came to swindle.

The musical was an astonishing success, with a Broadway run of 1,375 performances. It has since become a staple of community and high-school theater, which I say by way of praise, not disparagement. Willson's subject, after all, is community.

There is a wonderful photo of Meredith Willson at the 1958 North Iowa Band Festival, held in Mason City. The composer was fresh from his *Music Man* triumph; he had the world, and more important his hometown, in his pocket. As the Mason City High School band launched into "Seventy-Six Trombones," Willson leaped from his parade car, commandeered a baton, and, to thunderous applause, led his alma mater's band in his signature composition. Contrary to Scripture, this prophet *was* with honor in his hometown.

Twenty years after his death, he remains honored. Mason City is graced by a cluster of attractions known collectively as Music Man Square. This $10 million project, which, it is pointed out, consumed "no tax dollars," includes a streetscape right out of the 1962 film version of *The Music Man*, a museum dedicated to the musical and its creator, Willson's restored boyhood home, and an excellent bed and breakfast in the neighboring manse of meat-packing magnate Jacob Decker.

In best Midwestern booster fashion, our guide, Val Collison, calls the Square "a crowning achievement for Mason City." She is especially proud of the rehearsal rooms where a new generation of River City youth are learning to play on hundreds of instruments (not just trombones) donated by alumni of Mason City High School. Their rental costs: a buck a year.

Meredith Willson's hometown remains a human-scale city of prairie-style houses, only a couple Wright but none wrong. The Mason City *Globe-Gazette* is still locally owned. The regional culture, like Willson's finest, enduring work, is fashioned out of indigenous material. Shockingly, art is possible without reference to the coasts.

We sandwiched Mason City between grave-hopping in Sauk Centre, Minnesota (Sinclair Lewis), Anamosa, Iowa (Grant Wood), and West Branch, Iowa (Herbert Hoover). Lewis, the harsh satirist of *Main Street*, and Wood,

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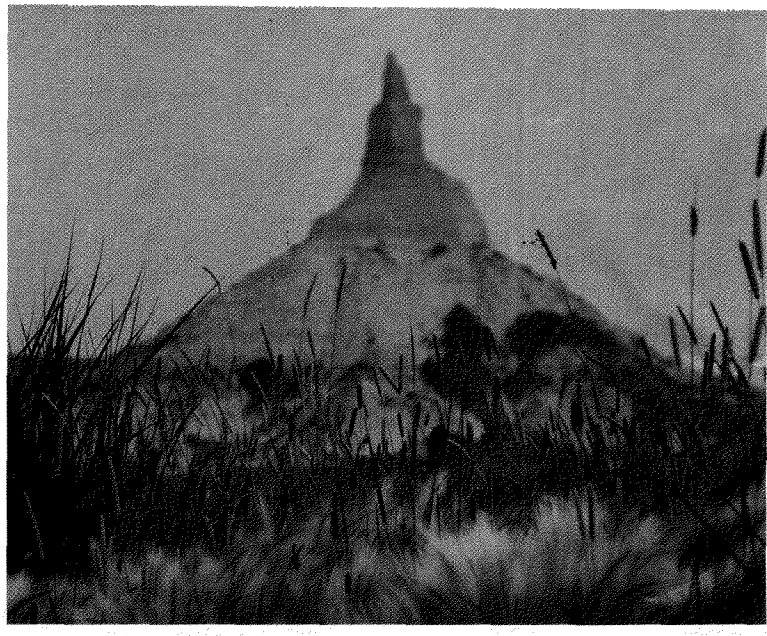
Karl Zinsmeister

laconic painter of *American Gothic* and other icons, shared an almost evangelical zeal in their promotion of Midwestern culture. Grant Wood urged a "revolt against the domination exercised over arts and letters and over much of our thinking and living by Eastern capitals." Provincial writers, painters, and playwrights should turn "our eyes inward upon ourselves." America, he understood, was the sum of its localities: "When the different regions develop characteristics of their own, they will come into competition with each other; and out of this competition a rich American culture will grow." Homogenization and concentration of power are the enemies of American art.

"Your true regionalist is not a mere eulogist," cautioned Wood; "he may even be a severe critic." Enter Sinclair Lewis, who memorized Minnesota's 87 counties and their seats, collected only Minnesota artists, and satirized his people with a savagery borne of love. He wrote *Main Street,* he said, from "a love of Main Street, from a belief in Main Street's inherent power." His best book, *Babbitt* (1922), perhaps the funniest American novel, is a regionalist dystopia whose title character is a tragic fool not because he is provincial but because he buries his essential Minnesotanism underneath an idiotic cover of conformity and standardization.

Lewis always loved his home state, once promising with a straight face to help make Duluth the American Athens. If American Lit has largely forgotten him, Sauk Centre, his cradle, remembers. His boyhood home is lovingly preserved. (The father of our tour guide, Marcy Weitzel, was delivered by Lewis's father, Dr. E. J. Lewis.) Our pilgrimage coincided with the annual "Sinclair Lewis Days," run by Lewis's bete noire, the Chamber of Commerce, and featuring a Miss Sauk Centre beauty pageant and a pool tournament. Lewis would have loved it.

The author's ashes blew away on his windy interment day in 1951. So his headstone, if not his dust, is in the family plot in Sauk Centre's Greenwood Cemetery, just beyond the new Morningview Drive development, where we may be sure George W. Babbitt IV is chuckling at "Sex and the City," boasting of the high school's array of computers, and wishing that Sauk Centre would attract a Starbucks.

We spent the final night of our trip in Cedar Rapids, home base of Grant Wood and Quaker Oats, the archetypal American company. Quaker and its memorable trademark now belong to Pepsi—much to the disgust of old-time Quaker Oats people—but Grant Wood is very much present at the superb Cedar Rapids Museum of Art.

Thirty miles southeast of the Quaker plant is the birthplace of our first Quaker president, Herbert Hoover, who, unlike our second Quaker, Mr. Nixon, took his faith's precepts seriously enough to be the closest thing to a pacifist ever to occupy his office.

Hoover defies understanding: orphan, peace-monger, engineer; a devout believer in vast energy projects (including the dam that is his memorial); a deep-dyed planner who sought ways to harmonize American individualism with cooperative effort; and a political puzzle whom his fellow Iowan, the radical historian William Appleman Williams, found endlessly fascinating, not least for his enigmatic remark during the Depression: "What this country needs is a great poem. Something to lift people out of fear and selfishness."

That poem was not to come from the brush of his neighbor Grant Wood, however. In his grumpy engineer mood, Hoover disparaged Wood's masterpiece "The Birthplace of Herbert Hoover, West Branch, Iowa" as too prettified. (What is it about Midwestern artists and Republican Presidents? Meredith Willson once composed a march for Gerald Ford's Whip Inflation Now program.)

Yet Hoover had an intrinsic awareness of the virtues of localism. He once said that American life reached its fullest flowering in smaller communities: "The very best results of all the forces in American life are in towns from 1,000 up to 150,000."

Even a whirlwind visit to the Middle West can hearten those who despair of a lockstep America. Sure, the outskirts of every small city in the country beg to be skirted, and the car radio in the age of Clear Channel seems to confirm Phil Ochs' lament "I would be in exile now/But everywhere's the same." But it's *not* the same. Not yet.

Just for fun, why don't we believe that our culture is reclaimable. That it's not too late for America to tip North Dakotaward, rather than for North Dakota to be washed away by the ABC-Warner-Trump axis of vile.

In 1939, after an Oxford education, the Iowa poet Paul Engle realized:

> My life is
> To be at home here by the cornfield's edge,
> Under the big light of American sky

The cornfields are still there; the sky is as big as ever; there is no reason why Iowa, the Dakotas, and inner America can't once more strike up the band.

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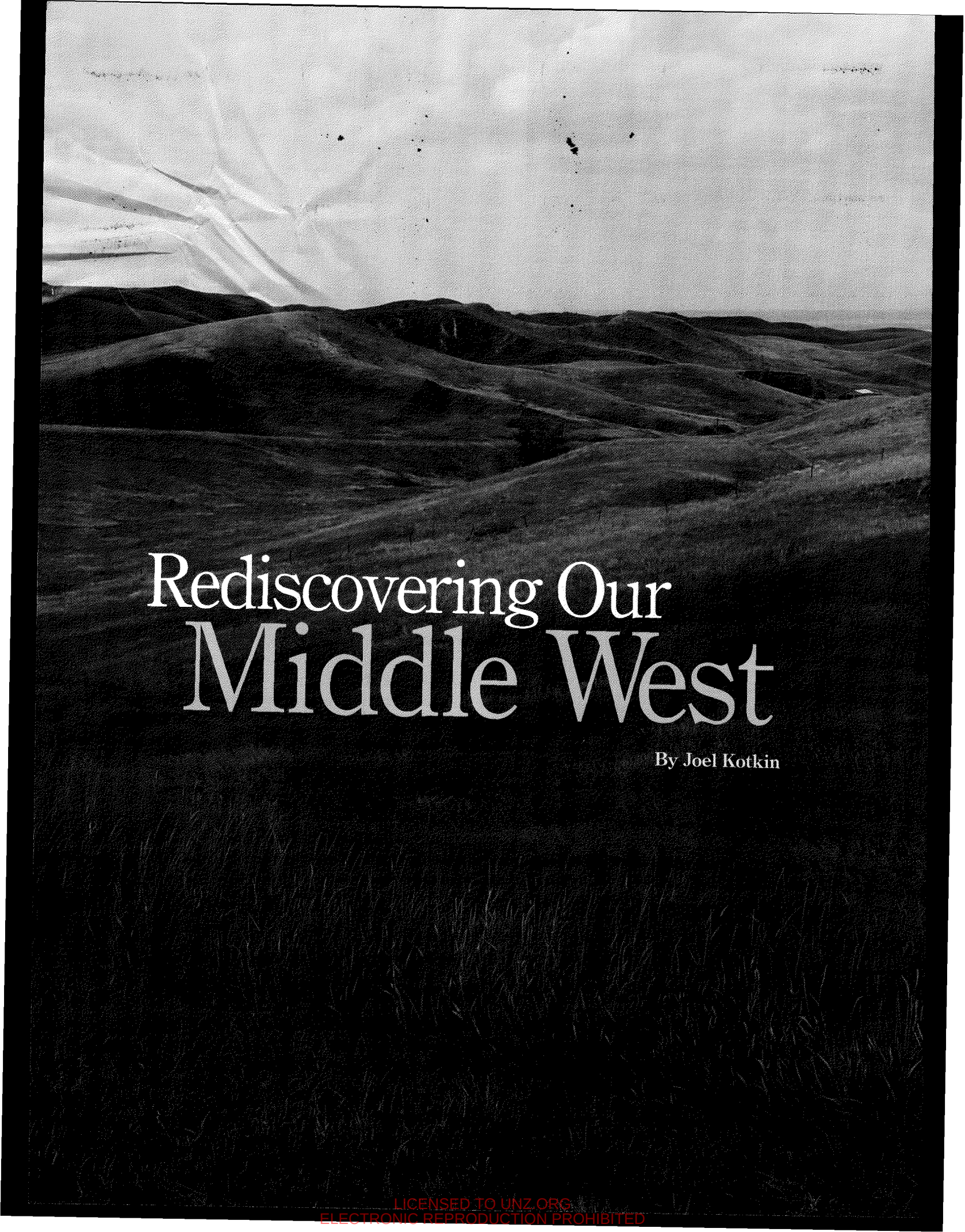

Rediscovering Our Middle West

By Joel Kotkin

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A heartland revival could reconnect American elites with a part of the country that has contributed some of the best elements of our national character.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—When President Thomas Jefferson acquired the vast new territory of the Louisiana Purchase, St. Louis, founded in the late 1760s near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, was the natural launching point for an exploratory expedition. So in May 1804, Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery set out from this city to map the sprawling new American wilderness.

At that point the city had a population of roughly 1,000. As it became the fulcrum for decades of expeditions and migrations west, rapid growth ensued. By the time of the Civil War, St. Louis was a great city: the nation's top river port, our largest flour producer, a key trading center, and home to a burgeoning base of specialized manufacturers (many run by industrious German immigrants, who by 1850 accounted for one out of every three residents). St. Louis made more shoes, bricks, and street cars than any city in the nation. It was the anchor of America's thriving agricultural and industrial heartland.

When it staged its famous 1904 Exposition, one of the greatest parties in American history, St. Louis was at the top of its game. Exactly 100 years after launching the Corps of Discovery up the Missouri River, St. Louis was the nation's fourth-largest metropolis. It was recognized around the world as a sophisticated, technologically advanced city. And it had sprinkled new settlers all across the Great Plains, where in innumerable towns they built homes and businesses, and erected churches, schools, hospitals, and cultural institutions at a rapid rate, profoundly influencing both the economic development and the moral character of the American nation.

Today, many parts of St. Louis are deserted, or forlorn. From a peak of more than 850,000 in 1950, the population has shrunk to barely 300,000 at present. Wide swaths of old city blocks lie abandoned. Further out, in the sprawling expanse explored by Lewis and Clark, many small towns and homesteads are likewise desolate or abandoned. To much of America, this is "passed over country" in every sense of the word.

Recently, however, there have been stirrings of life in the lands of the Louisiana Purchase. Not only neighborhoods of St. Louis, but scores of cities and small towns throughout our Middle West are being rediscovered by a new generation of Americans. Places like Sioux Falls and Fargo in the north, Boise, Casper, and Missoula in the west, and Kansas City and Omaha in the center are out-and-out thriving, despite little or no attention from the national media.

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The elements behind the Midwest's recovery from a century-long shrinkage of America's agricultural and industrial economies are many. They include things like the increasing costliness and dysfunction of our larger coastal cities, the liberating power of the digital revolution, and revived respect for what may be called Plains values in our current era of moral confusion.

Over the last ten years, according to analysis by demographer William Frey, there has been a marked decline in the longstanding out-migration from America's Midwest. Since the end of the dot-com boom in 2000, the region's cities, including St. Louis, have done far better than places like San Francisco, San Jose, New York, and Boston, all of which have been losing more domestic migrants than gaining. In addition to attracting "cultural refugees" from other parts of the U.S., many heartland cities have at last begun to attract some immigrants from abroad. In cities such as St. Louis and Kansas City, the numbers of immigrants arriving in the 1990s was more than twice what was experienced in the 1980s.

This demographic resurgence has been supported by an evolution of local economies away from their previous dependency on agriculture and basic manufacturing into new areas like information, business services, and finance. Over the past five years, some of the very fastest growing "new economy" towns in the U.S. have been places like Fargo and Bismarck, North Dakota; Rapid City and Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Des Moines and Iowa City, Iowa. This has only been spottily reported in our national media, who in contrast could not restrain themselves in coverage of the more coastal-oriented dot-com boom.

Midwestern cities also appear to have weathered the recent tech and financial busts better than ballyhooed "new economy" strongholds like Seattle. Generally speaking, it has been better, of late, to be a software engineer in Fargo than in Seattle or San Jose; a financial analyst or business service professional in Sioux Falls or Omaha than in New York or Boston.

A complex interplay of geography, demography, and economics is behind this turn of fortunes. Perhaps the most obvious factor is the affordability of housing. Many parts of the country, particularly the coastal areas, have become prohibitively expensive for young potential homebuyers. America's growth from 248 million residents in 1990 to nearly 300 million today has placed pressure on housing, particularly in places with regulatory obstacles to growth or lack of available land. In some places, the impact has been so severe that even recessions have minimal effect on house prices.

In places such as Washington, New York, Portland, Boston, Los Angeles, Seattle, and even their peripheral suburbs, prices are now so high that half or more of families cannot afford to buy a home. In San Jose, only one in five residents now has sufficient

Left: Karl Zinsmeister

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income to become a homeowner, while among San Franciscans only one in ten can hope to buy his own domicile.

By contrast, in the great middle of the country, stretching from St. Louis to Bismarck, more than three out of four families generally qualify to buy a home. This provides those communities with enormous advantages in retaining and attracting workers, particularly younger ones who in previous eras might have headed for the coasts.

Affordability is clearly emerging as an important factor in the regional battle for talent. Recent evidence suggests that high costs have played a major role in the recent "brain drain" from the greater Boston area. One detailed new study found that costs were the reason 27 percent of recent out-migrants left the area. Today fully half of all graduates from the Boston area's vast complex of colleges and universities leave the region, roughly half for locales they never lived in before.

Karl Zinsmeister

Similar problems now bedevil other "hot" talent environments. In scores of interviews, many skilled, younger workers have told me that the hot cities of the 1990s are now impenetrable to the sinking of roots. "People are coming here to start businesses because they see this as a better place for them to raise their families," suggests Ernie Goss, a regional economist based at Creighton University in Omaha.

Matthew Wyczalkowski, a 30-year-old programmer at Washington University Medical School, moved from the Bay Area to St. Louis's Tower Grove neighborhood, a mixed area south of downtown. "I like the walking environment, the culinary diversity. And we like the prices," he explains. "The opportunities here are extreme. We couldn't dream of buying a house in California. Here the dream can be real."

Lower housing prices often combine with more reasonable office rents and tax and regulatory environments. In today's hypercompetitive business climate, keeping business costs under control is a critical component of viability.

Randy Schilling, president and CEO of Quilogy, a fast-growing software firm based in St. Charles, Missouri, sees his lower real estate costs as part of a business price structure that is increasingly important for competitiveness. "In some ways, the middle of the country is doing to the coasts what China and India are doing to America," he suggests.

In contrast to the late '90s, Schilling reports he now has little trouble attracting skilled programmers from either coast. "We can hire a guy from Chicago or New York, give him a pay cut, and he still lives better," Schilling explains. "The talent that used to flow out to the Bay Area, San Diego, and Boston is now coming to places like this."

In addition to these economic factors, there are also social ones. Since the 9/11 attacks, suggests demographer Frey, there has been a "sharp and immediate flight from population density." Companies have been urged by federal regulators and shareholders alike to spread their operations to less high-profile areas. Much more fundamentally, many individual people seem to be seeking out safer and less stressful environments.

It also seems fairly certain now that the 2000s have produced a more conservative mood—particularly among the young—than the "Sex and the City" 1990s. Recent surveys of college students conducted by researchers at UCLA and the Harvard Institute of Politics find a more conservative, although not necessarily right-wing, mood among young people, including a greater interest in religion and family life. These are goals Midwestern cities are well positioned to satisfy.

These advantages have been further augmented by the rise of the Internet, which now allows companies to compete for individuals and opportunities in remote locations. "I have customers all over the country, but our costs are low and our people can afford

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to live well here," notes Thane Paulson, president of two growing Sioux Falls business service firms. "We appeal to a lot of people who want to come here to enjoy the South Dakota lifestyle."

Len Hurley, whose Sioux Falls-based firm Hurco manufactures water and sewage treatment equipment, agrees. His company frequently seeks out skilled welders or machinists. "We get e-mails from people all over the country who want to come here," he reports. A chance to raise a family in a place where families are still strong is one powerful appeal.

During generations of agricultural depopulation, the young and ambitious left the Midwest in droves. Well raised by strong families, and effectively educated in orderly schools, this diaspora of Midwesterners seeded the economies of other places ranging from California to the Atlantic coast. But today there is a reverse flow.

A diaspora of Midwesterners seeded the economies of places ranging from California to Georgia. Today, there is a reverse flow.

The demographic reclamation of America's heartland is a promising development, even for our coastal regions. A shift toward the center of the country could offer a needed respite for crowded urban areas. Growth on the Plains and in other low-cost areas of the U.S. might help the coastal mega-regions to concentrate on addressing fundamental problems of sprawl, failing education, and soaring home prices. The gravest threat to great cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago is not a siphoning of growth to regions like the Great Plains, but rather the giant cities' inability to manage their own growth with effective schools, open housing markets, and so forth.

A renewed heartland could also provide young American families and immigrants who are now increasingly priced out of large metropolitan regions a critical new "field of dreams" for realizing their ambitions for a good life. Rather than growing frustrated in Queens or Montebello, ambitious new arrivals can harvest opportunities and buy homes and raise children in places like St. Louis or Omaha, where their presence and energies would be highly prized.

Perhaps even more important, a revival in our central heartland will reconnect American elites with a part of the country that has offered some of the best elements to our nation's fundamental character. Even during decades when it struggled economically, America's Middle West has remained a source of whole families, bright students, reliable workers, and good neighbors. Rediscovering those traits in the midst of our nation will be good news for all of us, whether we live in Lewis and Clark territory, or in places far away.

HUNTINGTON *continued from page 21*

rapidly before September 11. While a precise judgment is impossible, at the start of the twenty-first century the United States was probably becoming more rather than less Christian in its religious composition.

Americans tend to have a certain catholicity toward religion: All deserve respect. Given this general tolerance of religious diversity, non-Christian faiths have little alternative but to recognize and accept America as a Christian society. "Americans have always thought of themselves as a Christian nation," argues Jewish neoconservative Irving Kristol, "equally tolerant of all religions so long as they were congruent with traditional Judeo-Christian morality. But equal toleration...never meant perfect equality of status in fact." Christianity is not legally established, "but it is established informally, nevertheless." And, Kristol warns his fellow Jews, that is a fact they must accept.

But if increases in non-Christian membership haven't diluted Christianity in America, hasn't it been diluted, dissolved, and supplanted over time by a culture that is pervasively secular and irreligious, if not anti-religious? These terms describe segments of American intellectual, academic, and media elites, but not the bulk of the American people. American religiosity could still be high by absolute measures and high relative to that of comparable societies, yet the secularization thesis would still be valid if the commitment of Americans to religion declined over time. Little or no evidence exists of such a decline. The one significant shift that does appear to have occurred is a drop in the 1960s and 1970s in the religious commitment of Catholics. An overall falloff in church attendance in the 1960s was due to a decline in the proportion of Catholics attending mass every Sunday. In 1952, 83 percent of Catholics said that religion was very important in their lives; in 1987, 54 percent of Catholics said this. This shift brought Catholic attitudes on religion more into congruence with those of Protestants.

Over the course of American history, fluctuations did occur in levels of American religious commitment and religious involvement. There has not, however, been an overall downward trend in American religiosity. At the start of the twenty-first century, Americans are no less committed, and are quite possibly more committed, to their Christian identity than at any time in their history.

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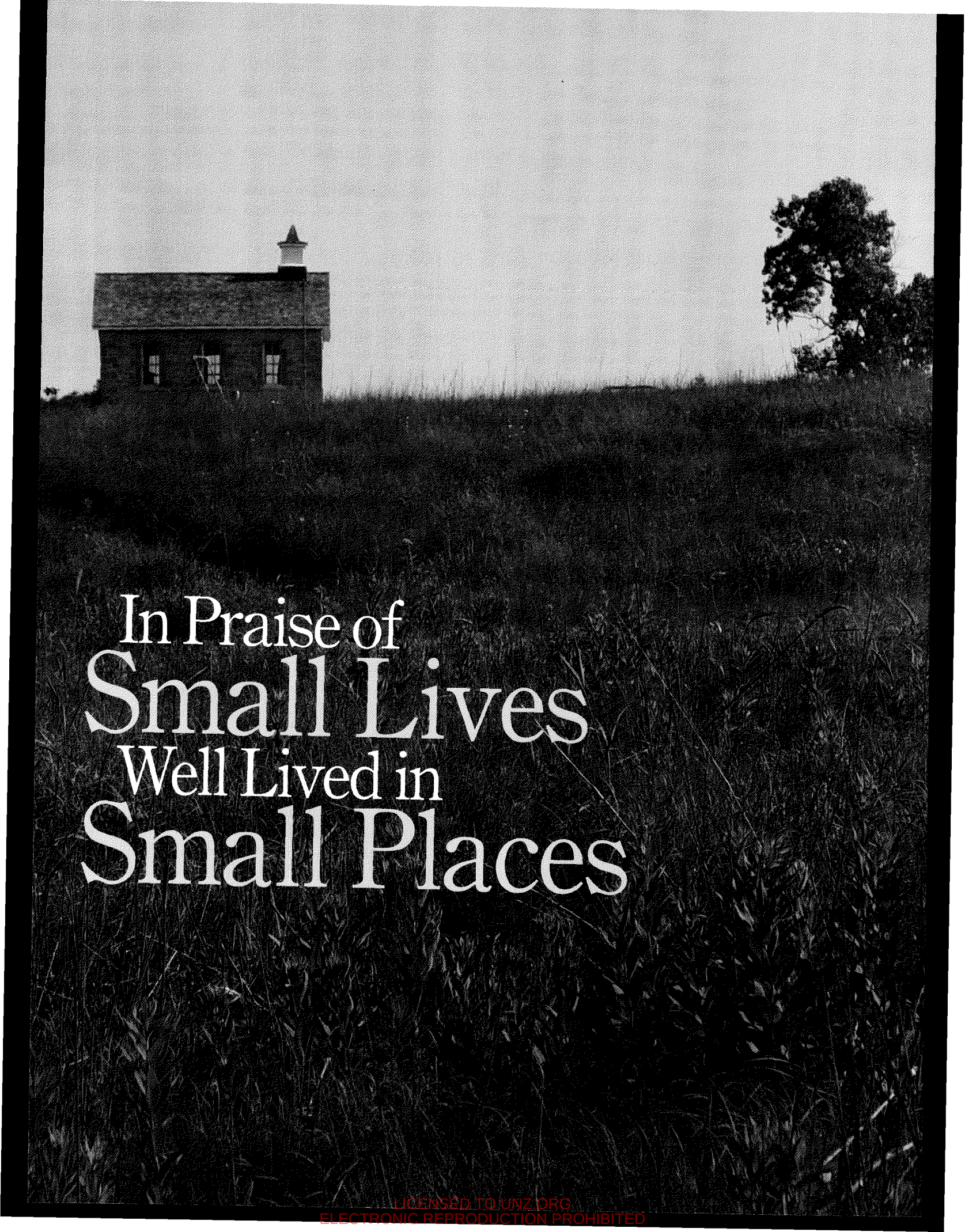

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Called Home

By Blake Hurst

"There is no reason for Tarkio to exist." So says Dr. Rex Campbell, rural sociologist and leading expert on small Midwestern towns. I'm sitting in his office in Columbia, Missouri, and it's my hometown upon which he has just pronounced a death sentence. He goes on to say that the sort of family agriculture I've grown up with will be gone by the end of my working life.

Tarkio is a small town located right at the corner where Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri meet. A local brochure on area history touts our county as having been the northwestern-most outpost of slavery in the U.S. Our failures in marketing go way back.

We're a farming county, blessed with good soil and normally dependable rainfall, and we raise corn, soybeans, and some hay and pasture. When the first settlers arrived, the land was primarily prairie, but now trees dot the river bottoms and ground that is too rough to till. With no mountains, no major bodies of water, no natural wonders, and no large concentration of people, we're classic flyover country. Tarkio itself features a grocery store, a few convenience stores, an auto repair shop, two beer joints, and an assortment of eating establishments. Churches outnumber beer parlors by about six to one. Tarkio has some 2,000 residents, and the total county population is just over 6,000.

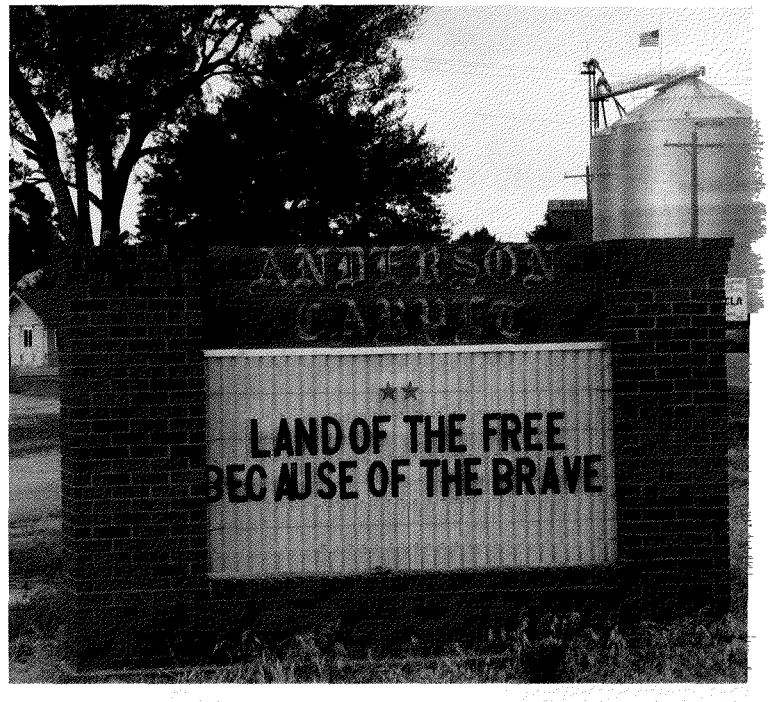
Our income and population statistics tend to reinforce Professor Campbell's pessimism. Our county led the state of Missouri in population decline in the last census period, losing nearly 15 percent of its people in ten years. That merely continued a depopulation trend that dates back to 1900. Our per capita income is now just 77 percent of the national average. The only encouraging statistic is our unemployment rate, consistently under 2 percent. But that too is linked to troubles in our rural economy. When people lose their farms or jobs here, they don't wait around for an uptick in the economy. They just leave.

Technology has sharply decreased the number of farmers needed here. My grandfather needed one worker per 80 acres to reap the earth. Today, a single full-time worker on our farm can manage 1,000 acres. This is why the number of U.S. farms has fallen from 6 million in 1940 to 2 million today—with only about 200,000 of those farms large enough to sustain themselves without some sort of off-farm income.

Fewer farmers mean fewer people to buy cars, clothes, and food. And the consolidation of retailing has been tough on some small Midwestern towns. This is not new; Campbell notes that people started bypassing Main Street for better prices and more variety back at the advent of the Sears and Roebuck catalog.

The rural Midwest has also suffered from the unintended consequences of things we devoutly desired and obtained. At about the same time President Eisenhower was establishing the interstate highway system, Missouri embarked on a drive to "get Missouri out of the mud" by insuring that every Missourian was within three miles of a paved road. Those roads made it easier to get our produce to market. But they also led to cities where our citizens relocated for education and better paying jobs.

Not all of rural America has suffered like this. In fact, Campbell points out that most of rural Missouri actually grew in population during the 1990s. Those paved roads run both ways, and



Left and right: Karl Zinsmeister

rural counties close to urban areas are becoming popular places to live. Just in my middle-aged lifetime, the rural infrastructure has moved from party lines to high speed Internet. As recently as 15 years ago, I had neighbors who received only one television station. Now most rural residents have a satellite dish. The isolation that used to separate rural from urban America has largely disappeared, and that has made rural living more attractive.

But counties too far from cities to attract commuters, or too flat and waterless to attract retirees and rusticators, have problems. A map of the plains states highlighting counties that have lagged in population growth would be roughly identical to a map showing the areas most suitable for agricultural production. A century ago, the Midwest's flat elevations and rich, dark soil were major economic resources that made us the envy of mountain and hill states. But now food is in surplus, and scenery is at a premium.

Nonetheless, life goes on here in Tarkio. I always pick up my copy of the *Tarkio Avalanche*, our local weekly, at the convenience store when it comes out on Wednesdays. A recent summer issue is fairly typical of what occupies our small town: The lead story is the county fair, with a front-page schedule of events. We have cattle, lamb, and hog shows,

Blake Hurst is a TAE *contributing writer.*

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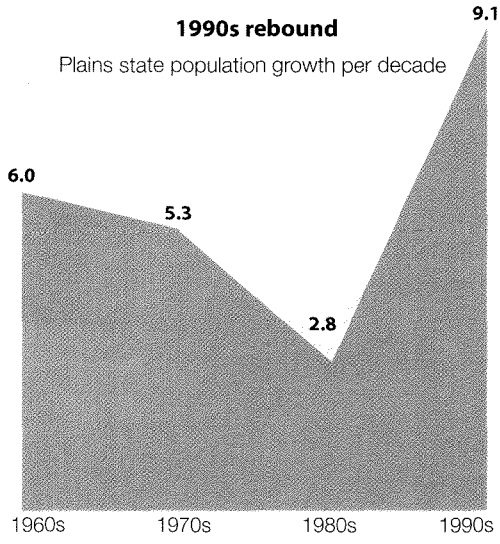
Family Revival in the Plains?

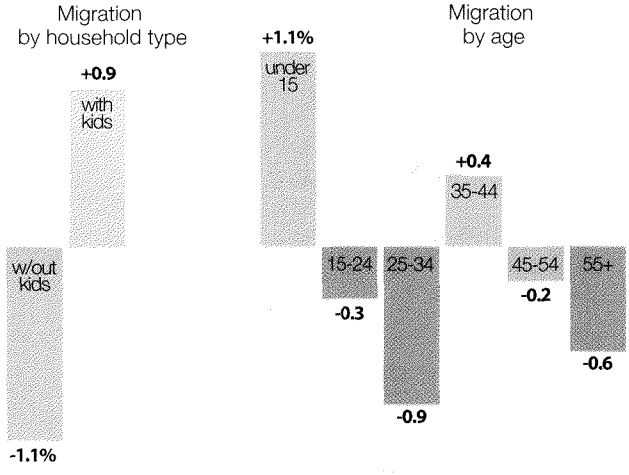
Data by William Frey, Brookings Institution

(Plains states = Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota)



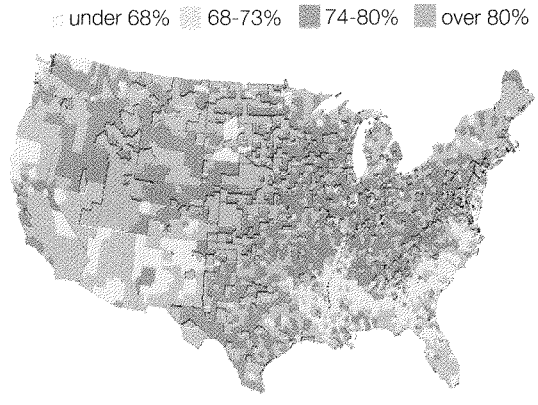
Children & parents move in as others move out

1995-2000



The Marriage Belt

Childrearing households headed by a married couple in 2000



along with the judging of poultry, rabbits, cats, dogs, and other small animals. I'm not sure how you judge a rabbit, but the competition for the purple ribbon will no doubt be intense.

Also on the front page is a story about the Missoula Children's theatre, which is staging a play here. My brother and his wife made the front page with the announcement that they are opening a laundromat on Main Street. Our mayor is big on neatness, and the letters section of the paper features correspondence from owners of cars up on blocks, offended by Mayor White's crusade to rid Tarkio of immobile vehicles.

On the second page is Elsie Fae's column, a quirky diary of happenings about town. Elsie can be funny, is almost always rude, and keeps everyone abreast of her family, the local coffeeshops, and dining in the area. She's not impressed with most of the last half of the century, and this week is upset that the new restaurant in town calls its staffers waitpersons instead of waitresses. Elsie's grasp of what is news is sometimes shaky, but she knows grammar and language. She has published excerpts from her husband's World War II diary and letters, and her own recollections of the war are patriotic, beautiful, and can bring tears to my eyes.

Another staple of her column is memories of undergraduate life in the former Tarkio College, a small liberal arts college with a beautiful campus on the western edge of town that was the county's largest employer until its demise a decade ago. Elsie Fae credits the college with inaugurating the Sexual Revolution, as both the inventor of nylon and the birth control pill matriculated here. Its buildings are now used to house adolescents sent to Tarkio after a brush with the law. Those students provide what little excitement we have during their periodic escapes, which normally end at the eastern edge of town when the escapees realize that nothing but miles of cornfields stretch into the distance. Their urban backgrounds did not prepare them for such landscapes, or for the coyote howls at dusk that often leave them quite ready to head back to incarceration.

An impartial observer might wonder why any of us would love Tarkio as we do. It's easy to poke fun at small, cranky, unstylish places. It's much harder to describe their virtues. But I'll try.

Living in a small town means that everyone you know is connected to you in more than one way. We don't deal with each other just in business transactions, or as schoolmates, or as neighbors. We interact on a number of levels at the same time. The manager of the local grocery store is also my nearby neighbor. And a customer of my greenhouse business. And his daughter is married to my nephew. We also go to the same church. Those kinds of relationships tend to temper my reaction to any problem I might have at the meat counter, or any complaint he might have about my flowers. Every social interaction is undertaken with the understanding that we'll both be here 20 years from now, and we'll remember our history together. Politeness is not a luxury when you live in a place this small. Out of such ties is civilization knitted.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently lauded a company that allowed

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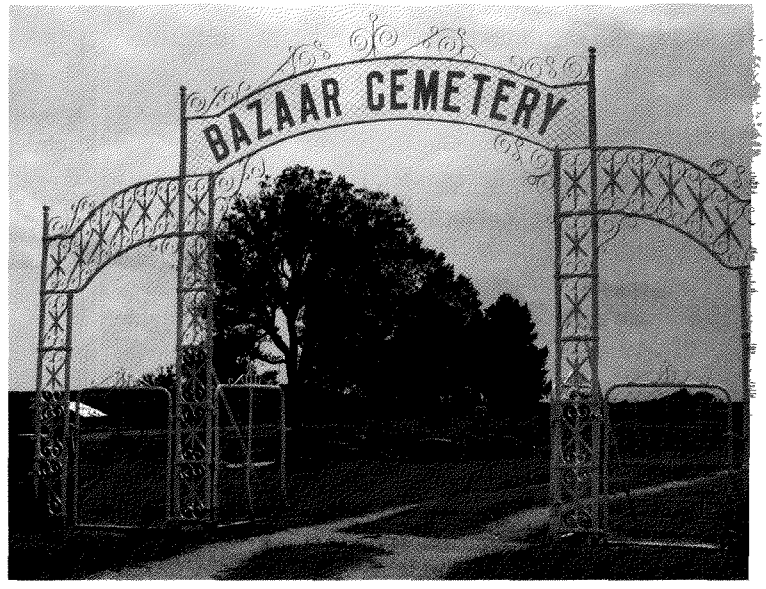
its employees to work on civic projects. In small town America, taking time from business to work on community projects is a routine part of life. We know the church or the hospital won't survive unless we take part. My brother spends untold hours supporting the local fair and serving as business manager for our church. That sort of dedication is expected, and is offered willingly by the people who live in small communities. Ties that stretch across generations deepen loyalty to local organizations.

Our high school football team barely has enough players to scrimmage, but the kids work hard, and everybody who goes out for the team gets a chance to play. Almost all of the boys participate in three sports, have part-time jobs, play in the band, and sing in the school choir. In a neighboring town, the football players remove their shoulder pads and pick up their tubas to help put on the half time show. This kind of breadth doesn't turn out many star college athletes, but we do tend to raise great, rounded citizens, who've experienced both winning and losing at an early age.

The chance to be part of nearly every activity in a small school has often come at the price of less challenging curricula. But technology is helping change that. My son has pretty well exhausted the local math teachers, and now spends his evenings on math problems he receives over the Internet from an engineering college in central Missouri. He spends an hour each day listening to lectures on compact disc for another course. So we've managed to secure the best of both worlds—a good education combined with the chance to see our son score a touchdown.

Critics of small places often mention such towns' resistance to change as a reason for preferring the bright lights of the big city. And I suppose that life here does have a tendency to repeat from year to year. We're tied to the seasons, and harvest 2004 will be a lot like earlier versions. But then, I like harvest. I like the fact that I'll be working the same fields my grandfather did 70 years ago. He picked corn with a mule and a wagon, and I'm driving a quarter-million-dollar combine that evaluates yields and moisture levels as it moves, with the help of global positioning satellites. I like the fact that a trip down Main Street means I'll see people my family has done business with for four generations, that I'll talk to people I've known all my life. I like the fact my small business makes a difference here, that my small payroll is important to my community.

I've never owned a set of house keys, because nobody locks doors here. My son spends his Saturday evenings hanging out on the same street corners I did, with the whole community prepared to fill me in on any adolescent hijinks. That's why I'm much more concerned about the decline in our population than our low incomes. It doesn't cost much to live here, and when you are 90 miles from the nearest mall, shopping is simply not a major part of life. But our decline in population, particularly the decline in young families, is worrisome. Our schools have half the students they did 30 years ago, and the quality of those students has declined as small businesses, the college, and farmers have disappeared. Dr. Campbell is right: Our way of life is in danger.



Karl Zinsmeister

Where there is a problem, there's almost always a politician with a proposed solution, which usually involves throwing money at the problem. Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas has proposed a New Homestead Act which would forgive student loans to people moving to small communities, offer tax credits for new businesses in small places, provide tax free savings for investment in small towns, and establish a venture capital fund for investment in high out-migration counties. Most of these programs would be wasteful, but his bill does have the virtue of not trying to attract huge existing businesses to small places, but rather concentrates on the small businesses that already exist, and those that might be formed with a bit of help. But rural America's experience with government aid to agriculture has not been good, so a bit of skepticism is in order.

Judy Stallmann, an economic developer with the University of Missouri, works with small communities attempting to recover from an economy that has passed them by. She reminds me that towns only exist as long as they have a reason to exist. Many American towns simply disappeared in the nineteenth century when they were bypassed by the railroads. Nearly every day I drive by the location of the former town of Center Point, Missouri. It's now a cornfield, and no one suffers for its absence now, however painful its demise was at the time.

Stallmann emphasizes that Tarkio must work with the assets we have—hunting, bird watching, hiking. Another thing we have in abundance is isolation. The local phone company has developed an offsite data storage facility, where faraway corporations can back up their files through fiber optic lines and know it will be stored far from any disaster that might befall urban America. (Trust me, we would notice a cluster of young Arab men passing through town.)

No one can solve our problems except the people who live here. One of the virtues of rural Midwesterners is that we tend to be content with our lot. But a first step toward stopping our population loss is to admit we have a problem. Then we must

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work to keep the residents we still have. No government program, no huge economic development success, no technological breakthrough will effortlessly make Tarkio attractive to those who have never lived here. The joys of this place are too subtle, the satisfaction that comes from roots and tradition too slow to compete with 24-screen movie theatres, professional sports, and ski lifts. We have to create jobs one by one, as local people add a little value to our agricultural products, capitalize on our natural resources, or make things that we can sell to the millions of people who live within two hours of our main street. When there are more and better local jobs, then we'll be able to keep folks who prefer familiarity to excitement, who value loyalty over the challenge of climbing the corporate ladder, who want to raise their families in a place where everybody knows your dog's name.

I was harvesting last fall next to a small country church on a high hill. Far from any town, that church is where my maternal grandparents are buried. As I drove by, I noticed an excited group of youngsters gathering for a hayride. They were children who go to school with my son, as I went to school with their parents. The sky was a brilliant blue, the fields were a harvest palette of browns, yellows, and grays, and the trees were a riot of color. A baseball game was on the radio, and my brothers, son-in-law, nephew, and father were all working with me. It just doesn't get any better than that.

Maybe we do need a new Homestead Act, one that helps re-settle the Great Plains with people tired of the insanity of California and the impersonal hustle and bustle of the East Coast. Maybe there are good folks willing to accept a little less material wealth for the kind of spiritual well-being that comes from being part of a community like mine.

My two oldest children have traveled off to college, received degrees with highest honors, married, and have both returned to Tarkio to start their families and working lives. They are not prodigals who found life unmanageable in the larger world. Their return to their roots is a conscious choice, discussed at great length with their spouses. They know what is good and true in this life, and are willing to make sacrifices to maintain our tradition of small lives well lived in a small place.

My Kind of Town

By Sam Torode

South Wayne, Wisconsin is home to 485 people, three churches, two bars, one parking meter, a dozen well-fed stray cats, and not a single traffic light. Make that 486 people. Since our second son was born the population sign has been in need of an update.

One's first impression of South Wayne is that it's a dying town. The main street looks like an abandoned movie set from the 1940s. There are only a few businesses left: an engine repair shop, two banks, and a meat processing store that gets a lot of traffic during deer season. There's one restaurant—a tiny, mustard-colored diner just off the highway, with a sign out front that says "Squeeze Inn." The customers are mainly truckers passing through; the burgers are great.

When my wife and I moved to South Wayne—after a brief stint as Chicagoans—one of the first landmarks we noticed was our neighbor's camouflage pickup truck. It's a late-1970s Chevy, emblazoned with blotches of khaki and green, with a rack of deer antlers wired to the front grill. When its owner, Al, dropped by to introduce himself, he filled us in on its history. "My buddies and I just decided to spray paint it one night," he said. "We were having so much fun, everybody thought we must have been drunk, but—believe it or not—we weren't."

Across from Al's house is a low-income senior's home, which means that our yard work is occasionally interrupted by stories and recollections. One resident told us that his daughter used to sing back-up for Dolly Parton. We didn't believe him until he returned a week later wearing a T-shirt silkscreened with a photo of him with Dolly on his lap, her arm around his neck.

Fresh from a Chicago apartment, we didn't own a lawn mower. Bethany's teenage brother, who dubbed our yard "the lawn from hell," was unwilling to cut it for $20. After the lawn had been neglected for several months, a letter arrived from the South Wayne police department. It seemed we had violated a city ordinance against "noxious weeds," and faced a $200 fine.

I called the police station (we have a department of one: Officer Randy). "What exactly is a noxious weed?"

"Hmm...let me look up that ordinance." After much ruffling of papers: "Aw, just mow your lawn and you'll be alright. I sent out letters for three yards in town. Old folks with too much time on their hands call and complain."

Thankfully, my parents came for a visit the next week. They took pity and bought us a $99 mower from Farm & Fleet. Neighborhood decency was restored.

After growing up in Michigan and graduating from a Michigan college, I spent a year outside Philadelphia. The surroundings were beautiful, but life was much more rushed than I was used to. The green hills were interrupted by subdivisions of cookie-cutter houses that multiplied daily. I tried to take bike rides to relax, but I was nearly run over by the constant stream of luxury cars speeding along the narrow roads.

In a small-town Pennsylvania diner one morning, a stranger struck up a conversation with me. He was a displaced Midwesterner, too. "I'm moving back," he said. "People here just aren't friendly. Nobody talks to anybody."

That may be an unfair and sweeping generalization, but my own experience didn't do much to contradict it. Though I lived in the same apartment for a year, I never had a conversation with

Sam Torode is a freelance writer and graphic designer.

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any neighbors. The few times I saw my landlord, he called me "Todd."

A friend who grew up in Huntington, Indiana and is now a graduate student at Princeton called me up last year and confessed he wants to move back eventually. He's traveled extensively in Europe, in addition to living in the East, so I asked him what's distinctive about the Midwest. "People in the Midwest are friendly to strangers. When you act that way here, people think you're disingenuous—they don't understand it. They have a stereotype of Midwesterners as uneducated bumpkins. For all their supposed diversity, they have no tolerance for Middle Americans."

Karl Zinsmeister

"For people who want to escape," he explained, "the East Coast offers the allure of a life without any family connections—you and your friends are all single, living in apartments, pursuing money and entertainment. Most Midwesterners who leave for the coast are motivated by money. Midwesterners who return home are mostly motivated by family."

But why South Wayne? That's what many of our friends—even the Midwestern ones—wondered when we settled here. One asked, "Is that the bastard child of Fort Wayne and South Bend?"

At the time, we were just looking for an affordable home that was near the country and close to my wife's family (her parents and siblings live 20 miles away in a metropolis of 10,000). Later, we learned of her ancestors' connections to South Wayne. On her mother's side, Bethany's great-great-great grandfather built the first house in town. His son was a train conductor, and lived in an apartment above the station (which is still standing, but has been converted into a storage barn). On her father's side, her great-uncle founded the funeral home, still in operation two streets from our house. When we walk by it, we keep to the opposite side of the street—the proprietor hung himself in the basement 50 years ago.

Small town life definitely has its struggles. Our town is surrounded by waning family farms. "I feel like this town is under a cloud of spiritual oppression," the Lutheran pastor told us one evening. "The pastor before me felt it, too."

Despite the poor economy, we've been surprised to see how many young people are staying here, beyond high school and college. Family ties run deep. Next door, a young University of Wisconsin student told us, "Before I date a guy from town, I have to check with my grandma to see if he's related to me."

People here don't move around much. The neighbors on all sides of our house remember the man who built it in 1945, Sam Johnson. The house eventually went to a local schoolteacher and, 20 years after that, to us. When folks call it "Sam's house," they usually aren't talking about me.

"Sam was the butcher—he had a shop down on Main Street," one neighbor told us. "He had a horse that he rode all over town. Used to keep it hitched to that magnolia tree in your front lawn. But Sam would ride down to the post office and just drop the reins. He'd leave the horse standing there outside and it would wait for him till he came back."

Sam's horse could have run off to anywhere. He *chose* to stick around. Residents of South Wayne know how he felt. We could leave this town for seemingly greener pastures. But we get along pretty well. And nobody's in a rush.

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Confessions of a "Rich" Businessman

By Howard Blake

John Kerry wants to repeal tax cuts for upper income Americans. Now there's a surprise: a Democratic Presidential candidate attacks the rich. But who are "the rich"? Well, as Democratic politicians define the "fortunate few at the top of society," my wife and I are, or close to it.

We're only recognized as rich quadrennially, of course—when campaigns are in full swing. But even if we make the cut solely during election times, it's fun being rich. Wintering in Aspen, summering in Nantucket, luxury cars, fancy prep schools and Ivy League colleges, hobnobbing with movie starlets and marrying heiresses, I'm living large. Oops! No, that's John Kerry's life. Come to think of it, I drive a Ford Taurus, my kids have all gone to public schools, and my vacations usually involve economy motels and breakfast at McDonald's.

Here are the straight facts on my rich household: My wife and I receive income from two small businesses that keep us working literally dawn to dusk, including many weekends. This is not unusual: 85 percent of small businesses pay their taxes on the individual tax return of their sole proprietor.

In 2002, we had a taxable income of $114,175, some $23,000 less than in 2001. Business reverses explain part of the decline; the rest is from increased depreciation allowances in the Bush tax cut. We paid $11,245 in income taxes in 2002, and $13,294 in Social Security and Medicare taxes.

If our Social Security taxes seem higher than you'd expect, that's because we pay at the self-employed rate, which is 12.4 percent until we reach the maximum taxable level. Howard Dean wanted to levy Social Security taxes on all income—which would have meant about a $5,000 tax increase for my family. The "I Have a Scream" speech was greatly appreciated at our house.

Because I received a substantial tax cut when President Bush's reforms went into effect, I must be rich. And John Kerry will certainly have to increase my taxes to fulfill his promises. Families earning over $200,000, whom Kerry has particularly targeted in his tax plan, make up just 1 percent of all taxpayers, and they already pay 43 percent of all income taxes. They simply cannot finance Kerry's entire budget, as much as he would like them to. Plus, well over half of the taxpayers Kerry has targeted for tax increases had business income. He'll be raising taxes on small businesspeople in particular, and that includes my wife and me.

The figures I've shared so far don't really even capture the effect that taxes have on our business, and our lives. In 2002, we deducted $77,214 in depreciation as a business expense; a figure greatly increased by some temporary provisions in the Bush tax cuts. But we spent some $120,368 on capital improvements. Our business is growing—we've just added family members to the enterprise, and will need to generate more sales as a result, so we're expanding. Plus our truck wore out.

These are not unusual situations for a small business. A recent survey found that one in six small businesses had invested at least $100,000 in its company in the last six months. And when a business is growing, as ours has been, it is quite normal for capital purchases to be larger than depreciation. So when business people report income for purposes of taxes, it is very often larger than their cash flow. Thus, because of the way our tax system works, the firms that make our economy grow and provide new jobs are almost always short of cash.

Think about what my depreciation and investment figures mean. Our capital investments require us to lay out hard cash. For tax purposes we get some credit on the other side via the depreciation of our existing equipment, but there is no actual flow of cash to us for that. The net effect, therefore, is that our cash flow—the actual money available to us to pay our bills—is some $43,154 less than our paper income for tax purposes. Our cash flow available for living expenses and taxes wasn't $114,175, but just over $71,000.

From that $71,000 of actual cash flow, subtract our federal tax payments of $24,539 and our state income taxes of around $4,000, and you find that our cash available for living expenses is actually around $43,000. Sufficient for our needs. But clearly a good deal short of true wealth.

I recently filed my W-2 forms, reporting wages on the 30 people who worked for us last year. Our business is seasonal, so most of our employees are part time, but we're one of the largest employers in our small town. Any tax system that

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encourages our business to grow will add to that payroll. To the extent I can afford to, I will increase both the number of employees and their wages. Our payroll has increased at a much faster rate than our profits. In the last four years, the dollar amount of my payroll has doubled, while our profits have remained essentially flat. That's another point somehow forgotten when tax cuts for the rich are discussed.

Liberals argue that equity demands the rich pay a larger share. Conservatives respond that the money people earn belongs to them, and that taxes drag down business growth. In a strange way, liberal politicians seem to have more faith in free markets than conservatives do—because they act as if we "milk cows" will keep on producing growth and tax revenues no matter what the rate or timing of taxes.

I suppose my wife and I do what we do because we like to. We must, because if you divide our $43,000 of spendable income last year by the 6,000 hours of labor, much of it manual, that the two of us put into our business (we kept track), our time works out to be compensated at around $7.50 an hour. Just the same, incentives do matter. And it is a concrete fact that cash alone fuels our growth. With more cash, our business will grow faster; we're a small player in a big industry, and the market is there for additional growth. We're constrained only by the availability of investment capital, and that has to be generated by our business.

My wife and I have a passion for our little enterprise. It's been our life for 20 years, demanding whatever creative abilities we have, consuming most of our waking moments, focusing our energies on producing the best products we can, and beckoning us to work seven days a week to ensure good service for our customers.

Then every four years the Democratic nominee for President informs us we don't pay enough taxes. We are called greedy and self-serving special interests. We're told that we are "rich," and that we have wealth only because we are lucky.

I have described my financial situation in some detail in the hope that this snapshot will help people understand who most of the top 5 percent of taxpayers really are, and how taxes affect the folks who make America work. I know I'm fortunate, but I certainly don't feel rich. I have fond hopes of some day becoming wealthy (a goal I share with most of my fellow citizens), and a tax policy that encourages my efforts toward that end would not only benefit me, but the rest of society as well. But the reality is that my wife and I have to work extremely hard every day just to hold our current position.

We've been managing our finances with care, investing in our business with the kind of concentration that comes from spending our own money, and providing jobs for dozens of our neighbors. I dare say that the country benefits from our stewardship—and that of hundreds of thousands of other "rich" people just like us—more than it would from any of John Kerry's plans for our money.

Howard Blake is the pen name of a Midwestern small businessman.

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—Cicero

The Queen of Arizona

By Bill Kauffman

Born in 1870 to a Kansas buffalo hunter and his Bohemian pioneer wife, young Sharlot Hall kept buffalo calves for pets and recalled watching her mother "wash the heads of men who had been scalped by the Indians." At age 11, Sharlot rode "a long-legged, dapple gray mare" along the Santa Fe Trail to her family's new ranch and its hopefully named but far from immaculate "Virgin Mary" gold mine near Prescott in the Arizona Territory.

Autodidactically literary, the ranch-girl's poems and articles, many published in the California magazine *Out West*, helped interpret the Southwest for the dudes and armchair tourists back East. Hall was contemptuous of Eastern cities, whose denizens "grow small in the huddled crowd." Only in the wide-open West could one stand with "his feet on the earth."

Her regional pride flared to a white-hot intensity when in 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt endorsed Senator Albert Beveridge's proposal to grant statehood to Arizona and New Mexico only if they merged into a single state with the ridiculous name of Arizona the Great. (Arizona was too Democratic, and New Mexico too Catholic, for Protestant Republican tastes.)

Hall learned of Roosevelt's action while she was on assignment in northern Arizona for an *Out West* issue promoting statehood for her territory. She grew "more and more indignant" as she pondered the slight. Upon arriving home, she recalled, "I asked my mother, who thought I was coming down with pneumonia, to let me have a fire in the sitting room and have the family go to bed and let me alone."

By the time the fire went out, she had composed the poem "Arizona," a defiant assertion of Arizona's claim to statehood:

No beggar she in the mighty hall where
her bay-crowned sisters wait;
No empty-handed pleader for the right
of a freeborn state;
No child, with a child's insistence,
demanding a gilded toy;
But a fair-browed, queenly woman,
strong to create or destroy.

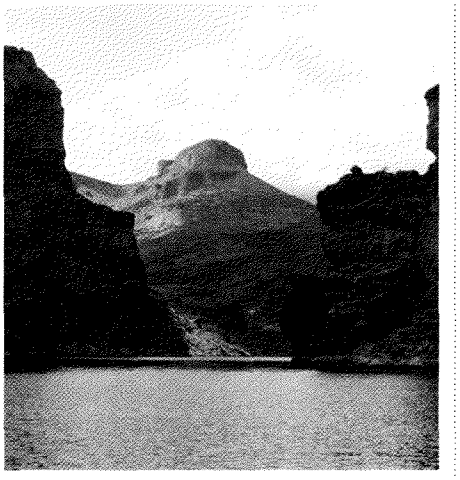
Perhaps, she mused, Arizona was too good for the rest of the country:

Cities we lack—and gutters where
children snatch for bread.
Numbers—and hordes of starvelings,
toiling but never fed.

If the United States didn't want Arizona, then to hell with them! Time was on Arizona's side:

We will wait outside your sullen door
till the stars that ye wear grow dim
As the pale dawn-stars that swim and
fade o'er our highty Canyon's rim;
We will lift no hand for the bays ye
wear, nor covet your robes of state—
But Ah! By the skies above us we will
shame ye while we wait!

The poem, capturing so well the hurt pride of Arizona, was a sensation. Territorial Governor Joseph Kibbey printed "Arizona" as a broadside and had it placed on the desk of every U.S. senator and representative. Reciting the poem on the House floor, Arizona delegate Marcus Aurelius Smith persuaded Congress to permit the two territories to hold referenda on the shotgun marriage. New Mexicans approved the merger, but Arizonans, preferring a humble Arizona to Arizona the Great, voted it down.



Thus, fair-browed, queenly Arizona finally entered the union on its own on Valentine's Day 1912, the last of the 48 contiguous United States.

Sharlot Hall went on to build a museum of Arizona history in Prescott. Her pet cause was placing gravestones over the interred bodies of forgotten pioneers. And though her verse is now itself mostly forgotten, Arizonans may thank Hall that their state, while perhaps great, is not Great.

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Beat the Press

The hand that rules the press...rules the country—Judge Learned Hand

Ideological Greed at Air America

By Chris Weinkopf

Here are some of the useful facts I learned listening to Air America, the all-liberal talk radio network:

- Neil Bush blew up World Trade Center building number seven.
- Rush Limbaugh isn't just a big, fat, pill-popper, but an evil Nazi too.
- President Bush launched the invasion of Afghanistan not to root out al-Qaeda, but to secure a valuable pipeline for his buddies in the oil industry.

That's where my education ended. I tried to tune in the network's local affiliate again while driving to work one morning, but the voices of Al Franken, Janeane Garafolo, Chuck D, and Air America's lesser-known hosts were gone, replaced by the tinny sound of Mexican pop music.

In Los Angeles, it was Off-the-Air America less than one week into the network's existence. The local affiliate says it wasn't paid for leased airtime, a charge Air America vehemently denies. The result was an end to Air America's programming, not only in L.A., but in Chicago, too.

It must have been an embarrassing moment for the network's luminaries. To think, it wasn't long ago when they were bright stars. Headliner Franken was a *Saturday Night Live* favorite. Garafolo, too, had a promising career—remember *The Truth about Cats and Dogs*? And Chuck D ruled the rap world with his band Public Enemy.

Now all three find themselves peddling anti-Bush diatribes and conspiracy theories on a fledgling radio network that may not be able to pay its bills. A network that features almost as many public-service announcements as paid commercials. A network that's seen four of its top executives quit or be fired within two months of its launch. The flap in L.A. and Chicago exposed a sad truth about Air America—that it has to *pay* stations to carry its signal, and not the other way around. There's a euphemism for shows that run on rented airwaves—"paid programming."

Chalk it up to ideological greed. Not content to control TV and print, the Left set its sites on talk radio, the one media niche where conservatives—largely unwelcome elsewhere—rule. But for liberals, overtaking the Right's lone media stronghold is the equivalent of waging ugly urban warfare—fighting where the natives are decidedly against you, in a place your allies would just as soon not visit.

Most every other stab at liberal talk radio has failed, and Air America appears headed for the same fate. Michael Harrison, editor of talk radio's trade magazine, *Talkers*, says that as far as he can tell, "the money is drying up" at Air America, and the network must radically "change its business plan" if it wants to survive.

Not that Air America's parent company, Progress America, is too concerned. Wealthy liberal benefactors have reportedly sunk $30 million into the venture. That's enough to keep the network operating, sans profit, for four years, company officials claim. That boast seems doubtful, though, in light of Air America's recent financial stumbles. But then, surviving until 2008 isn't the point. To fulfill its real purpose, Air America need last no longer than November 2, 2004.

It's no coincidence that this network debuted at the onset of a Presidential campaign. Or that its shows generally involve little more than hosts and callers venting their shared hatred for Bush and all things Republican. Unlike other infomercials, Air America isn't hawking Ginsu knives, juicers, or exercise fads, but John Kerry. And with its combination of vitriol and paranoia, the network's single political purpose seems to be keeping the Democratic base agitated and energized. Think of it as a perpetual Howard Dean scream.

Unseating President Bush is a higher priority for Air America than turning out a quality product or making a profit. Franken has already admitted, "I'm doing this because I want to use my energies to get Bush unelected."

Likewise, the liberal stalwarts who've bankrolled Air America aren't so much investors as campaign contributors. If nothing else, they have found a clever way to skirt federal limits on donations. For them, the only bottom line is whether Air America helps put Kerry in the White House. Sending Bush, we suppose, off digging trenches for that Afghan pipeline.

Chris Weinkopf is editorial page editor at the Los Angeles Daily News.

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The Press and The Public Are Worlds Apart

By James Glassman

The headline on my copy of a touted new survey by the Pew Research Center read, "Press Going Too Easy on Bush."

Now *there's* a story!

It was late May, and the media had spent the past three months celebrating vicious antagonists of the administration like Richard Clarke, trashing not only George Bush himself but also practically all of his policies and key advisors: Rumsfeld, Rice, Ashcroft, Wolfowitz. It was odd, I thought, that under these circumstances the public would think the press was going easy on the President.

Then I read the report.

The opiners described in that headline weren't average Americans. They were members of the press corps itself. The Pew study found that 55 percent of national journalists believed that "press treatment of Bush was not critical enough." Only 8 percent thought it was "too critical."

The public, however, had the opposite view: 24 percent thought the press was going too easy on Bush; 34 said it was too tough.

The press and the public remain, in the words of the Media Research Center, "worlds apart."

This split has been visible ever since a groundbreaking article 23 years ago in AEI's *Public Opinion* magazine. In it, academics Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman presented results of a careful study of media elites. They discovered that from 1964 to 1976, 81 percent of journalists voted for the Democratic Presidential candidate.

A later survey by Freedom Forum found that 89 percent of Washington-based reporters voted for Bill Clinton in 1992 and only 7 percent for George H. W. Bush. Meanwhile, 59 percent viewed the 1994 Republican "Contract with America" as a "campaign ploy," while just 3 percent called it a "serious reform proposal." The public disagreed, and the GOP captured the House for the first time in four decades.

Today, the media and the public are drifting even farther apart. In the new Pew study, 34 percent of national journalists describe themselves as "liberal," compared with 22 percent in 1995. Only 7 percent of reporters say they are conservative at present. For the general public, the results are again reversed: 33 percent of Americans call themselves conservatives; 20 percent, liberals.

On social issues, the gap is even wider. For example, the national press states by a margin of 91 percent to 6 percent that "belief in God is not necessary to be moral." The general public says, to the contrary, that belief in God *is* necessary, by a margin of 58 percent to 40 percent.

The Pew study appeared the same week as a new book by David Brock titled *The Republican Noise Machine: The Right-Wing Media and How It Corrupts Democracy*. Brock's book comes on the heels of *What Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias and News*, by Eric Alterman, and *Big Lies: The Right-Wing Propaganda Machine and How It Distorts the Truth*, by Joe Conason.

This fantasy that the Left gets a raw deal from the national press is broadly shared by journalists. Incredibly, Pew found that only 2 percent of the national press corps identified CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, or National Public Radio as liberal—though 69 percent leapt to call FOX News conservative.

But, in one hopeful sign, many in the press understand that the *New York Times* is increasingly a journal of liberal advocacy, not the "newspaper of record." Among national journalists, 20 percent identify the *Times* as liberal, while only 4 percent attach that label to the *Washington Post*.

In their commentary on the Pew study, executives of the Committee of Concerned Journalists and the Project for Excellence in Journalism suggested, "The fact that journalists are more likely to see a conservative tilt in the news than a liberal one…could be a sign of liberal bias."

No kidding. In recent years the Left has convinced itself that its defeats have been caused by FOX News and conservative talk radio shows distorting national opinion. The truth is that thanks to growing public skepticism of broadcast and print journalism that is often openly biased, and new access to direct news sources through the Internet, people are making up their own minds.

That's the big new media story of the last decade: "Americans Tune Out Biased Press, Form Own Views." Read all about it!

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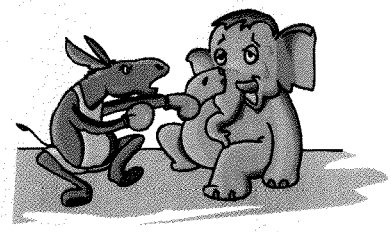

Trench Warfare 2004

By Grover Norquist

On May 10, pollster John Zogby boldly predicted: "John Kerry will win the election."

He reported that in his latest poll only 43 percent of voters believed Bush deserves to be re-elected, and 51 percent said it's time for someone new. Bush and Kerry are in a statistical tie, with very few undecided voters (who historically tend to be against the incumbent when they finally make up their minds). Among voters who cite the economy as most important, Kerry leads Bush 54 to 35 percent; those who cite Iraq also favor Kerry 54 to 35 percent; and those who cite the general war on terrorism prefer Bush 64 to 30 percent. In April, the proportion of Americans who cite Iraq as their top concern rose from 11 to 20 percent. Zogby states that Kerry has been a "good closer"—at least in Massachusetts elections and within the Democratic Presidential primary—and posits that even the improving economic news is too late to save Bush.

This writer looks at that same polling data and the current landscape and sees an increasingly likely Bush victory.

The Gallup poll had Bush and Kerry at 49 to 48 percent in the first week of February, and 48 to 47 percent in the first week of May. Between those two surveys, anti-terrorism "czar" Richard Clarke published a book undermining the President as a leader in the war on terrorism, the 9/11 hearings further questioned the Bush administration's preparation and response to terrorism, American deaths in Iraq climbed sharply, and horrific photos of idiot sadism in an American-run prison were released. Yet the Bush-Kerry polling numbers didn't budge.

From this, we learn that candidate George W. Bush does not have a glass jaw. And the 2004 election begins to look like World War I trench warfare, where month-long artillery barrages and attacks fail to move the battle lines. Why don't war, terrorism, and foreign policy news move voters? Perhaps because America is not at war.

Yes, there are more than 130,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and war news is a constant presence on television. But there is no draft, nor even fear of one. This contrasts with Vietnam, where every year 2 million 18-year-old males and their families and friends watched the draft lottery to see if they would be sent into the fray. That makes this war less real to many Americans.

The increased focus on Iraq has given Ralph Nader what he lacked: a rationale for his campaign. Nader is now the "peace candidate" and potential home for disaffected Dean voters who see Kerry and Bush as equally committed to continuing the Iraq occupation. Further problems in Iraq might benefit Nader rather than Kerry.

One wild card: How would another terrorist attack on America move voters? One could imagine this breaking either way—highlighting Bush's admonition that the world is too dangerous to leave to liberal Democrats, or supporting Kerry's claim that Bush has not done enough to stop such an attack.

The prime minister of Spain didn't lose because voters were cowed by a terrorist attack on Madrid, but because of his own poor reaction—falsely claiming it was committed by Basque separatists. Similarly, if the Bush campaign suggested the terrorists used an attack to vote for Kerry, or Kerry blamed Bush for the acts of terrorists, voters would react poorly. The first campaign to speak publicly following an attack on the U.S. could lose.

If an unrelenting series of assaults on Bush's leadership over Iraq and foreign policy has failed to break his Presidency, what will happen on the economic front? Unlike Iraq, one can now predict with some certainty how the economy will play out over the next six months.

GDP has been growing at an average quarterly rate of 5.5 percent, 1.1 million jobs have been created since August, and 340,000 jobs were created in March, followed by another 288,000 in April. Between now and the election there will be five more monthly announcements of job creation that should average 250,000 to 300,000 every month. How will Kerry's current lead on "ability to handle the economy" hold up in the wake of economic reality?

The Kerry campaign has tried its hardest to undermine Bush's perceived strength as a leader in the war on terror and the Iraq war. This has not moved voters.

The campaign now turns to the issue of job creation and tax cuts. These issues do move voters, and the trend favors Bush.

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Now Playing

Harry Potter For (All) The Ages

By Josh Larsen

Some witchiness in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

© Warner Bros. Pictures Inc.

One scourge of contemporary moviegoing is when parents bring young children to wildly inappropriate pictures. If you've been to a theater lately you've probably seen this: babies' screams competing with the howling werewolves of *Van Helsing*; tykes asking their moms why Paris is doing that to Helen in *Troy*.

What a nice contrast it is, then, to attend a Harry Potter film—the third of which, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, came out in early June. At one of these movies the experience is exactly the opposite of running into underage kids at a grown-up film. Here you'll find adults filling seats meant for kids. And enjoying themselves enormously.

The phenomenon goes back to the novels on which the movies are based. J. K. Rowling's kid lit has been devoured by readers of all ages. Still, the filmmakers could have fumbled the multigenerational appeal of these stories. It's tricky to deliver a movie that all ages can enjoy. The simpler route is just to deliver the children's version, full of bright colors and bathroom jokes, and leave grown-ups out.

But that isn't the way great children's movies are made. From Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* to *Shrek 2*, classic kids' films have woven childlike imagination with the wisdom of experience. They allow adults to feel the elation of youth while giving youngsters a taste of the burdens that come with being an adult.

Even more than in the first two installments of the series, that give-and-take between child and adult themes plays out delightfully in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, which follows our hero Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) as he negotiates the onset of adolescence. If the first two movies, which traced this young wizard's introduction into a hidden world of magic, were about a child learning to see himself as unique rather than a misfit, then *Prisoner of Azkaban* explores the burgeoning responsibility that comes with such unique talent.

After playing it safe with Chris Columbus (*Home Alone*) as director of the first two films, Warner Bros. took a risk and handed the third to Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuaron. Though a proven hand at children's material with his wonderful *A Little Princess*, Cuaron also delivered the steamy *Y Tu Mama Tambien*—a road flick rated NC-17.

What all of Cuaron's movies share is a flair for atmosphere, be it the grit of a Mexican byway or the lushness of a fairy tale. For *Prisoner of Azkaban*, this means a heightened attention to the surrealism pulsing through Rowling's novels, which often felt obligatory in Columbus's big-screen adaptations.

Among the unnerving touches is one of Harry's school books—the *Monster Book of Monsters*—which is wrapped in fur and has a clasp made of snarling teeth. It hides, of course, under Harry's bed. There's also a ghostly double-decker bus in which the role of back-seat driver is played by a ghoulish shrunken head.

Perhaps the movie's defining image is that of the candles lighting one of the professors' offices at Hogwarts, Harry's school. In previous films, the candles have been traditional wax sticks, but here the flames sit atop curving human backbones.

All of this makes for a more frightening film. Like the other Harry Potter pictures, *Prisoner of Azkaban* is rated PG, but it carries a far greater aura of fear and menace (not to mention a snarling werewolf of its own).

I'm sure that won't scare off most parents. Let's just hope the families save a few chairs for the adults without children.

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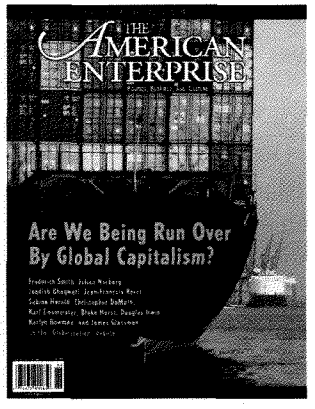

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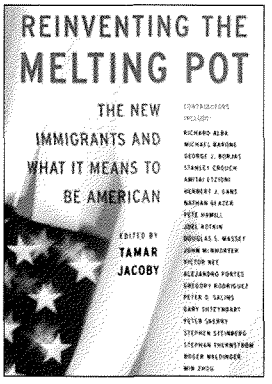
BookTalk

AMERICANIZE OR BUST

By Roger Clegg

Reinventing the Melting Pot: The New Immigrants and What It Means To Be American
Edited by Tamar Jacoby
Basic Books, 335 pages, $27.50



Immigration policy raises three issues: What sorts of people do we let in? How many do we let in? And how do we assimilate the new arrivals?

Conservatives are divided over the first two questions. Some are optimistic that high levels of unskilled immigrants from cultures very different from ours can be successfully absorbed, and that they benefit our country generally and our economy in particular. Others worry that we are taking in so many poor and unskilled non-English-speakers that we are courting disaster.

A new anthology, edited by Tamar Jacoby, comes down squarely on the side of the optimists. But it will not entirely persuade or reassure the worriers, because the various authors clearly have different definitions of what constitutes assimilation.

The book collects 20 essays by an impressive array of immigration experts, with an opening and closing essay by Ms. Jacoby. Among the contributors are Stephan Thernstrom, Nathan Glazer, Gregory Rodriguez, Joel Kotkin, George Borjas, Amitai Etzioni, Peter Skerry, John McWhorter, Michael Barone, and Stanley Crouch.

Each contribution is thoughtful and provocative, with a wealth of social science data throughout. Such data—the number of immigrants arriving now compared to various other times in our history; their countries of origin; which parts of the country they settle in and what they do there; how fast they and their children and their grandchildren learn English; intermarriage rates; their political beliefs and social views; the incidence of social pathologies—are essential to any intelligent analysis.

On a political spectrum, the views represented in this book range from medium right to medium left. There is a fair amount of consensus that, all in all, the most recent wave of immigrants—for the first time in American history overwhelmingly non-European—is being absorbed successfully. A frequent theme is that when immigrants are added to America's melting pot they are changed, but so is America. Assimilation, in other words, is a two-way street. Immigrants are not simply submerged and stripped of their old ways, but actually change what it means to be American.

In this sense, assimilation is inevitable, almost by definition. But it isn't especially helpful to say, in this almost circular fashion, that any new set of immigrants will fit into the social order, because the social order will expand to include the immigrants. Instead, we should ask which characteristics of the existing social order we want to preserve. Then we must decide whether a given group of potential immigrants will bolster or undermine those characteristics.

Few people would be concerned about immigration if every new entrant followed a few simple rules (bits and pieces of which are found in several of the essays) for successful living in a multi-ethnic America: Don't disparage anyone else's race or ethnicity; respect women; learn English; respect the law; don't have children out of wedlock; don't demand special treatment because of your ethnicity; don't see working hard as "acting white"; don't hold historical grudges; be polite; be proud of being an American.

Of course, many native-born Americans fail to conform to these rules. When several of the authors warn that some new immigrants are assimilating to an "oppositional" culture, they are simply saying that the immigrants are copying inner-city patterns of illegitimacy, crime, dependency, misogyny, and truculence. Several authors also note that today's immigrants are reinforcing our existing racial-identity politics.

How do we allow for some degree of ethnic pride while encouraging people to be *most* proud of being American? Several essays repeat the conventional wisdom that the acid test of assimilation is the intermarriage rate. But the real test may be voting outside of one's racial bloc.

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Our government has lately refused to require much of new immigrants. But there is plenty that individuals and little platoons can do to push and prod. The problem is that many Americans—especially our elites—are no longer willing to ask newcomers to give up parts of their separate culture in order to maintain American culture.

Successful assimilation requires those already here not only to assert, as Jacoby does, that "American political principles—and the values that flow from them—are non-negotiable," but to act on that statement with firmness and self-confidence.

Roger Clegg is general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Sterling, Virginia.

A CONSERVATIVE HOME ON CAMPUS

By Rachel Jurado

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By Lee Edwards
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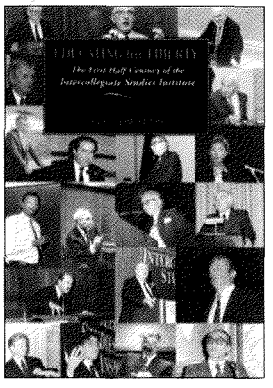

Liberal observers of the conservative resurgence on American college campuses are beset by the vague feeling that national conservative groups are taking advantage of conservative students. The *New York Times Magazine*'s infamous article, "The Young Hipublicans," offers examples of this dubious view of right-leaning students. Author John Colapinto's skepticism about the thoughtfulness of campus conservatives dominates the article, and he implies that young conservatives are pawns of right-wing activist groups whose interest lies simply in furthering conservative policies rather than teaching students to be clear thinkers.

Colapinto wrote that groups like the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI), Young America's Foundation, and the Collegiate Network "spend money in various ways to push a right-wing agenda on campuses." This heavy-handed judgment does an injustice to these groups, and particularly to ISI, founded in 1953, which has been called the intellectual anchor of the conservative movement for its emphasis on deep scholarship of the Western tradition. In *Educating for Liberty: The First Half-Century of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute,* Lee Edwards offers a sympathetic history of a group that has shaped modern conservatism by promoting education in the classics, and by putting a higher premium on independent thought than on politics.

ISI founder Frank Chodorov actually gave up voting in Presidential elections, "arguing that politics was not the solution, but the problem." Digging into the letters and public writings of other key figures at ISI, Edwards offers an intellectual portrait of conservatives who realized that any political activism must be grounded in philosophy, history, and virtue, rather than an over-concern with current political issues or simple economic individualism.

Educating for Liberty recounts the growing pains that affected ISI and all of the intellectual Right in the 1950s and 1960s. ISI originally bore the more libertarian name and philosophy of the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists. It took a more traditional turn due in part to prodding from conservative intellectual Russell Kirk. Kirk took issue with the group's first news-letter, *The Individualist*, in 1954. He sketched out numerous objections to total individualism, which many members apparently took to heart.

Pragmatism also played a part in the group's decision to change its name in 1961 to the innocuous Intercollegiate Studies Institute. William F. Buckley, Jr. had been lecturing on behalf of ISI at various schools, and he reported that the old name always elicited from audiences "a spontaneous outburst of laughter, as though one had referred to a society of Rosicrucians or phrenologists." It was decided a name change would better suit the most universal aim of ISI, which was to help preserve the Western tradition. It also helped attract more donors.

ISI, along with the rest of the conservative movement, has come a long way from the days when the term "individualist" elicited laughter. Numerous organizations, clubs, and newspapers now offer conservatives students a home on campus. One of the questions raised by *Educating for Liberty* is whether these groups strike the appropriate balance between thought and activism.

Conservative groups like the Leadership Institute openly admit that they wish to be boot camps for conservative foot soldiers on campus. Such activist groups have no doubt helped nudge student bodies rightward. But other conservatives like those at ISI believe that campus activism is a useless and even self-indulgent exercise unless students have been exposed to a classical liberal education that allows them to reason, sort evidence, and draw on history for the best examples of thought and social practice.

ISI maintains a conscious detachment from the national political scene for the sake of the education of undergraduates. Edwards goes so far as to attribute the group's durability to the fact that it has continuously kept its distance from hot button issues and refrained from using students to promote "issues of the moment." And the sustained interest of students in ISI, despite its utter lack of glitz, or hipness, or timely currency, shows that simple truth still has an allure.

Rachel Jurado, TAE's longest-serving student intern, attends George Washington University.

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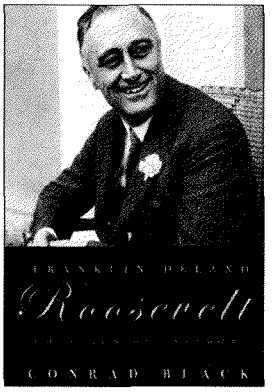
PRAISING ROOSEVELT

By Randy Boyagoda

Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom
By Conrad Black
Public Affairs, 1,360 pages, $39.95



In May 1940, Hitler's armies opened their Blitzkrieg across the western front, a portent of the horrors that were to engulf much of the world for the next five years. When informed, Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a series of strategic decisions and went to bed, enjoying—as he invariably did—a sound and unperturbed sleep. A man who was under severe and near-constant political and physical duress for the better part of two decades managed to endure and prevail by drawing on an inexhaustible supply of confidence and foresight. According to Conrad Black's admiring, sprawling biography, Roosevelt's greatest achievement was that he was able to instill this same decisive confidence in an economically paralyzed, isolationist nation. Under FDR's guidance the U.S. became the global guarantor of democracy, and indeed of civilization and prosperity.

Black makes many such grandiose claims, and his (at times over-detailed) treatment of FDR's achievements establishes the general validity of most boasts. Black presents a nuanced estimation of Roosevelt in domestic and foreign contexts as a charming occupier of the center in American politics, fending off challengers from the Left and from the Right. The result, according to Black, was "one of those rare leaders whose talents are as well deployed and as successful in war as in peace."

This book's imposing size allows for elaborate embroidering of FDR's rise through local New York politics to his command of the Democratic Party, the nation, and the Allies. Many of the thumbnail sketches and pocket histories provided along the way are enjoyably insightful, especially the pictures of Joseph Kennedy and of the Tehran conference. Black can get bogged down in pet interests, though, such as flogging Eleanor Roosevelt's meddling in policy matters, delving into New Deal economic arcana, and analyzing post-1940 French politics. Black highlights Roosevelt's famous ability to maintain a Sphinx-like ambiguity on fractious issues. Roosevelt would delegate difficult disputes to secondaries and warring parties, and intervene only when necessary to ensure political success or the national interest. (One of Black's central claims is that these latter two factors were inextricably linked during Roosevelt's terms.)

Chapters on the New Deal exhaustively re-create the policy debates and financial strategies with which FDR's administration tried to revive an economically and psychologically depressed nation. Black judges the New Deal as "passing but not brilliant economics," but "a masterly success" as "crisis management and preservation of a civil society." For New Deal opponents, the government's unprecedented intrusions into new areas of American life veered dangerously close to a state-controlled economy headed by a too-powerful leader. For others, the federal interventions were not nearly enough. Relying on a frequently squabbling brain trust, Roosevelt steered the nation along a winding path toward a recovery that was completed and significantly complicated by global developments.

Black's brio for Roosevelt is most pronounced in the book's segments on World War II. Even before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States fully into the war, Roosevelt nudged the nation from isolationism into a sympathy with the Allied cause, which culminated in the vital Lend-Lease program. Black rejects accusations that Roosevelt had prior knowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack, saying "Roosevelt's career reveals a cunning and devious political operator. But there is not a single instance of Roosevelt's being cavalier with the lives of American servicemen."

Black can be clumsy. He relies too heavily and not critically enough on memoirs from the major actors of the period. He inserts some embarrassingly pedantic footnotes. His references are not always clear.

Black often treats FDR as a saint, though he does occassionally pan the President, such as for his failed 1937 Supreme Court-packing ploy, and for the risks he took in pursuing amorous relations with Lucy Rutherfurd. He goes comparatively easy on Roosevelt for Japanese internment, and never completely squares his dramatic celebrations of FDR as the very savior of modern civilization with the detached realism that guided many of Roosevelt's dealings with the Soviet Union and Great Britain.

But his work does justice to the scope and effect of Roosevelt's ambitions. FDR really was dedicated to winning the war in support of a universal liberal democracy, safeguarded by effective international organizations, with an Atlas-like United States guarding the whole enterprise. In contrast, Churchill was too motivated by a desire to protect and restore British imperial interests; Stalin was most interested in Soviet control in Europe.

Black critically evaluates Roosevelt's failures at Yalta and the United Nations. Still, he emphasizes the "greatness" of Roosevelt's position, as the central architect of the post-War world. This is a biography which shares Churchill's conclusion that Franklin Delano Roosevelt possessed "a luster which will long be discernible among men."

Randy Boyagoda is an independent writer in Boston.

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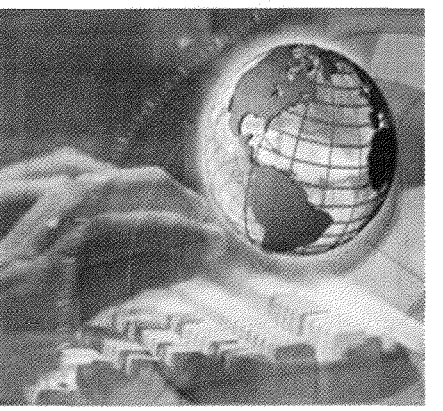
Edited by Eli Lehrer

the Digest

Summaries of important new research from the nation's universities, think tanks, and investigative publications



POLITICS

Grading D.C.'s Report Cards

Maurice McTigue et al., *Annual Performance Report Scorecard: Which Agencies Best Inform the Public?* Mercatus Center, April 2004 (mercatus.org)

Since 1993, the federal government has required that all of its major agencies keep the public informed about their operations and attempt to produce measurable results. Starting in 2002, all major agencies have had to issue annual reports. Mercatus Center scholar Maurice McTigue and his research team rated all of the cabinet-level departments (except the Department of Homeland Security, which did not issue a report in time) and other large agencies such as NASA and the Environmental Protection Agency.

McTigue's team ranked agencies on the clarity of their reports, the relevance of the measures used to demonstrate public benefit, and the presence (or absence) of plans to improve. The team did not analyze the merit of the services provided, only the quality of the reports. The Departments of Labor and Transportation tied for the top slot, with the Department of Veterans Affairs a close third. The Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services (the two largest agencies) brought up the rear, with the Agency for International Development, the nation's foreign aid program, doing almost as poorly.

Most annual reports did an adequate job of describing the government agency's benefits and the challenges it faced. Many reports, however, fell short when it came to providing results-oriented measures of activities and describing reasons for failures. Some agencies violated legal mandates: The Department of Defense and the EPA, for example, did nothing to assess the quality of the data they collected even though the law requires them to do so. Many reports appear almost laughably bad: The Department of Defense annual report, for instance, doesn't discuss outcomes in the Iraq war.

Better annual reports are possible. The Mercatus researchers found that the State Department—which makes very little contact with the public and produces few highly visible results—produced an excellent report. The Department of Health and Human Services, which exists mostly to provide easily measured public services, on the other hand, seemed unable to come up with any measures.

ECONOMICS AND REGULATION

Beware High-Tech Welfare

Scott Wallsten, "Why Successful Technology Hubs Are the Exception, Not the Rule," *AEI On the Issues*, April 2004 (aei.org)

Many localities seeking to develop their economies look with envy to California's Silicon Valley, Boston's technology corridor, and San Diego's cluster of biotech firms. These technology hubs provide thousands of well-paying jobs, produce little or no pollution, and create an economic aura heavy industry and credit card processing simply can't compete with.

According to AEI fellow Scott Wallsten, however, the hubs have "just one small problem." They "rarely work." Nobody, he explains, knows how to start one from scratch. Many governments try to prime the pump with tax credits, infrastructure improvements, and even direct payments to organizations looking to set up shop. Such plans often fail: Areas such as Prince George's County, Maryland and San Antonio, Texas have sunk millions into elaborate research parks (intended to create high-tech "hubs") that have generated few jobs.

Using data from the Census Bureau, Wallsten matched counties for various characteristics such as the number of high-tech jobs, amount of venture capital spent, and population. He found that counties that started research parks with the intention of building hubs did no better than those that did not. For Wallsten, this proves that "governments—both local and national—are not usually good at 'picking winners' when it comes to predicting which technology will drive

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future growth." Even when such schemes do succeed, they may simply shift growth and jobs from one place to another with no net economic benefit to the nation. He recommends that politicians and members of the public tread cautiously, making sure to understand regional economies before handing out subsidies. When companies do get subsidies, they should be held accountable for producing results. And governments shouldn't try to create large technology hubs. "The vast majority," of schemes, Wallsten concludes "should remain in the realm of science fiction, where they belong."

Outsource Away

Daniel Dresser, "The Outsourcing Bogeyman," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004 (foreignaffairs.org)

Outsourcing has become a hot political issue. Nearly all Democrats (and a fair number of Republicans) decry companies that send jobs overseas. While outsourcing is nothing new for blue-collar jobs, recent media reports have created a perception that massive numbers of white-collar jobs are now likely to go out of the country.

According to Daniel Dresser, who teaches political science at the University of Chicago, nearly all of the arguments against outsourcing are based on false data and incorrect assumptions. To begin with, only about 10 percent of jobs are even susceptible to outsourcing. All the rest—even in the information age—depend upon geographic proximity. Dresser writes that "the parts of production that are more complex, interactive, or innovative: ....marketing, research, and development," are very difficult to shift overseas. Some statistics, likewise, have been blown out of proportion: An estimate of 3.3 million job losses sounds dire until one realizes that it's spread over 15 years, thus affecting less than 0.2 percent of the workforce each year.

Manufacturing employment has fallen rather sharply in the United States, but the declines mirror those around the globe. The declines stem from productivity increases (which raise wages and living standards) rather than outsourcing. In fact, Dresser argues, outsourcing has a number of benefits, including higher corporate profits and higher wages.

Outsourcing, Dresser admits, does cause pain for individual workers while benefiting the entire economy. To improve matters, he suggests making more workers eligible for help under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. He also suggests that companies might consider setting up insurance programs to help employees who fear losing their jobs to outsourcing.

Dresser concludes that outsourcing is worthy of being defended. "Otherwise," he predicts, "the results will be disastrous: less growth, lower incomes—and fewer jobs for American workers."

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Race and Activism

Karthick Ramakrishnan and Mark Baldassare, *The Ties That Bind: Changing Demographics and Civic Engagement in California*, Public Policy Institute of California, April 2004 (ppic.org)

Census data in 2000 proved what many had long expected: California, America's largest state, had no clear racial majority group. Despite predictions that this would lead to greater political significance for the state's growing black, Asian, and Latino populations, a new report suggests that higher levels of civic participation among white Californians will ensure that they continue to hold a balance of power.

For years, scholars have known that wealthy, well-educated people are more likely to go to the polls, attend public meetings, sign petitions for ballot initiatives, volunteer for political causes, write to elected officials, donate money to campaigns, and do other things associated with civic engagement. Based on analysis of a wealth of survey data from California, Karthick Ramakrishnan and Mark Baldassare, fellows at the Public Policy Institute of California, find that this trend largely holds, but that race and ethnicity, quite apart from education and wealth, also appear to play a sizeable role in civic engagement.

Except for attendance at public meetings—where Latinos and blacks, respectively, are the most engaged—whites lead the pack for all activities. Blacks were second in most categories the researchers studied, with Asians and Latinos bringing up the rear. Some differences were a matter of law: Many Latinos in California, for example, are non-citizens and thus cannot vote or sign ballot initiative petitions. Other factors correlating with political participation—such as home ownership and income—explain reasonably small parts of the disparity. The main factor reducing political participation for minorities seems to be education. Were minority groups better educated, the differences would almost, although not entirely, vanish. (Asians, for example, have roughly the same level of education as whites on average but remain relatively politically disengaged.) In particular, large differences in contributing money to political candidates and voting would still persist. An even larger difference in willingness to volunteer would also remain. The two researchers believe that stronger civics education at all levels and better education in general would play the largest role in increasing civic engagement in California and elsewhere in the country.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Food Aid Fuels War

Matthew LeRiche, "Unintended Alliance: The Co-option of Humanitarian Aid in Conflicts," *Parameters*, Spring 2004 (carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters)

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Over the past several decades, well-meaning non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have provided massive amounts of aid in war zones. According to Matthew LeRiche, a British postgraduate student, many have seriously underestimated the role such aid plays in war fighting. "The cunning co-option of the massively valuable resources of the humanitarian aid system is how many militaries and paramilitaries have continued to support their soldiers and campaigns despite the loss of military assistance," he writes. "The determination of aid organizations to remain neutral, however noble, enables local commanders to continue to pillage aid resources intended for those who suffer."

Although LeRiche identifies many different ways that food aid can play a role in a conflict, several techniques stand out. At the tactical level, small units (particularly in the low-tech, Third World wars where NGOs play the greatest role) can seize food aid for their own use, thus retaining combat effectiveness. They can also sometimes receive medical care from NGOs. As a strategic matter, governments and rebel groups can use refugee camps as bases of operation: If they drive refugees into a certain area, they can then ensure that food aid will be provided. The camps then can become supply depots for the forces in the area. By making war-related crises even worse (for example, by adopting scorched-earth tactics), armed factions can even increase the supply of aid. Governments such as North Korea's can also use humanitarian aid to free up resources for military purposes. In some cases, refugee centers set up by NGOs can even become concentration camps that facilitate the wholesale slaughter of out-of-favor groups. Despite pretenses of neutrality, providing aid in a certain area can be seen as a tacit endorsement of the group that controls that area, thus legitimizing it.

While he doesn't recommend doing away with it altogether, LeRiche sees serious problems with the current aid system. Aid organizations, he warns, must therefore, "develop a better understanding of the tactics used to manipulate them."

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Air Pollution Here and There

Steven Hayward and Ryan Stowers, "Air Quality: The U.S. and Europe Compared," *Index of Leading Environmental Indicators*, Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy and AEI, April 2004 (pacificresearch.org)(aei.org)

Many people assume that the politically liberal European Union has environmental policies that are "more sophisticated and enlightened" than those in the U.S. Steven Hayward, an AEI fellow, and research assistant Ryan Stowers put this theory to the test. Their results suggest that the U.S. and E.U. have very similar regimes when it comes to dealing with air pollution.

Though both the U.S. and E.U. have made progress reducing air pollution, a direct comparison of the two is difficult: The U.S. and E.U. use different measures to monitor pollutants, and, on the whole, American data series go back far longer. For four pollutants Hayward and Stowers could compare, the American-European match-up nets one win, one loss, and two ties. The E.U.'s environmental agency sets stricter standards than the U.S. for most pollutants, but it allows cities, regions, and nations to pass even when they fail to comply for as many as 35 reporting periods. (The American standards allow almost no wiggle room.)

Overall levels of air pollution, however, are higher in the United States for all four pollutants. Hayward and Stowers attribute this to greater use of emissions-free nuclear energy and higher fuel taxes in the E.U. Once they adjust for economic and population growth, the two find that "the U.S. and the E.U. have been reducing emissions at roughly the same rate."

OTHER COUNTRIES

Card-Carrying Brits

David Blunkett et al., "National ID Card Scheme Is Key to the United Kingdom's Future," Home Office, April 26, 2004 (homeoffice.gov.uk)

From Singapore to France, national identity cards have become a mainstay of daily life. So far, however, they have remained unknown in the Anglosphere.

A new proposal from Tony Blair's Labour government, though, will almost certainly turn U.K. citizens into national ID card holders by the middle of the next decade. Under the proposal which, given the U.K.'s parliamentary system will almost certainly become law, the government will begin a pilot program geared toward issuing every British citizen a standard national ID card. According to the Home Office—the department in charge of law enforcement—national ID cards will fight crime and "enable people to access services more easily, and prevent access to those with no entitlement." They will also simplify daily life, the Home Office says, by giving citizens "a watertight proof of identity for use in daily transactions and travel."

Under the proposal, the U.K. will set up a national identity register, create enhanced protections for the privacy of information kept in the register, and create a "family" of national identity cards. By a set date, all citizens would be required to have an identity card and use it to access government services. Carrying it around, however, would remain optional. The identity cards would use a biometric identifier (such as a fingerprint or iris scan) for security reasons. Most citizens' ID cards would probably be issued in the form of an enhanced passport, although they might also be incorporated into driver's licenses or other identity documents.

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Opinion Pulse

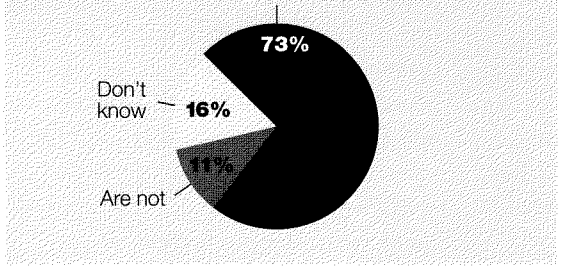
Edited by Karlyn Bowman

America A Half Century Ago

Fifty years ago, widely admired Dwight Eisenhower was President. Although more than 70 percent of Americans believed there were Communists in the government in Washington, doubts were growing about Senator Joe McCarthy. People were opposed to sending troops to Indochina. Almost everyone knew about the new polio vaccine, and most thought it would work. Parents worried about discipline in the schools. It was also the year the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education*.

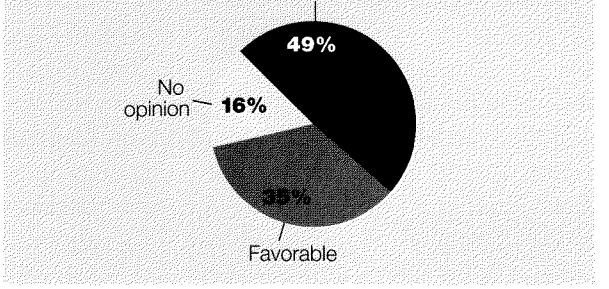
Question: Do you think...?

There are Communists in the government in Washington



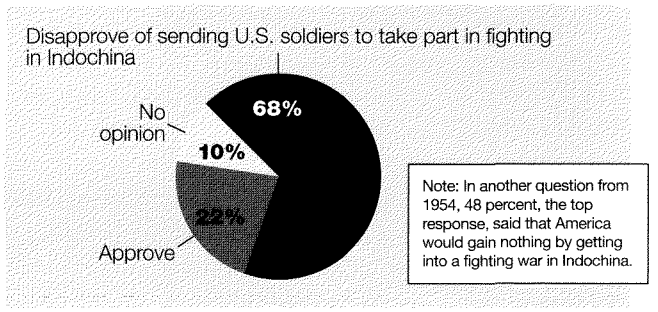
Question: What is your...?

Opinion of Senator McCarthy is unfavorable



Question: The United States is now sending war materials to help the French fight the Communists in Indochina. Would you...?

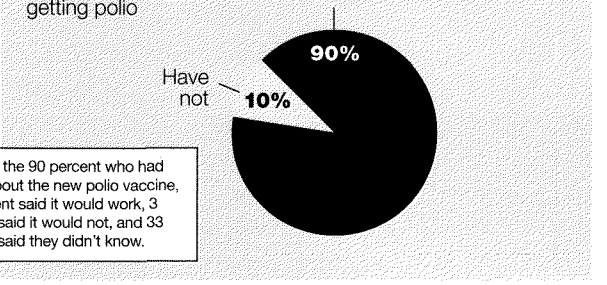
Disapprove of sending U.S. soldiers to take part in fighting in Indochina



Note: In another question from 1954, 48 percent, the top response, said that America would gain nothing by getting into a fighting war in Indochina.

Question: Have you...?

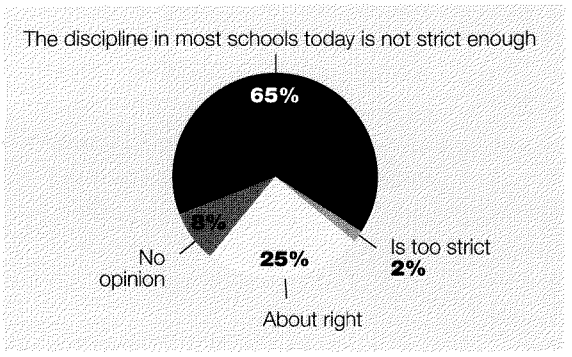
Have heard about the new vaccine to keep people from getting polio



Note: Of the 90 percent who had heard about the new polio vaccine, 53 percent said it would work, 3 percent said it would not, and 33 percent said they didn't know.

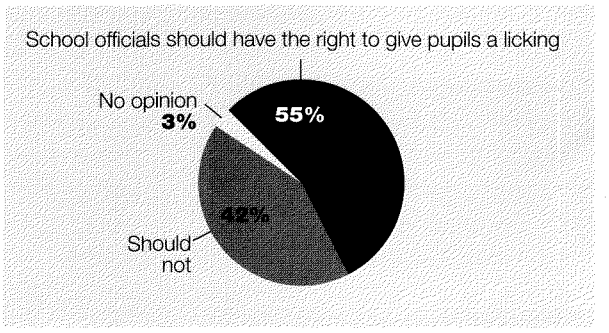
Question: Do you think...?

The discipline in most schools today is not strict enough



Question: Do you think...?

School officials should have the right to give pupils a licking



Source: The Gallup Organization, 1954.

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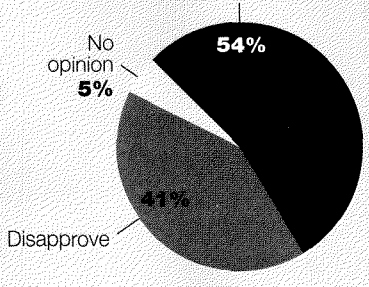
Brown v. Board of Education: Then and Now

Fifty-four percent of Americans approved of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Only 24 percent in the South approved. Fifty-four percent of white Americans said they would object to sending their children to majority-black schools. A Gallup question asked since 1962 shows that blacks and whites continue to differ about whether black children have the same educational opportunities as white children in their communities.

Question: The United States Supreme Court has ruled that racial segregation in the public schools is illegal. This means that all children, no matter what their race, must be allowed to go to the same schools. Do you...?

National response

Approve of the Supreme Court decision ruling racial segregation in public schools illegal

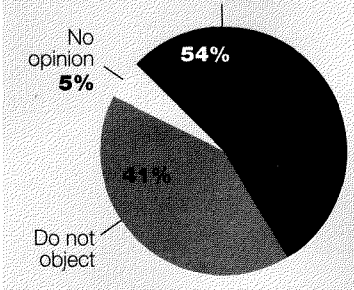


Note: Twenty-four percent of those in the South approved. Seventy-two percent in the East, 57 percent in the Midwest, and 65 percent in the West approved.

Question: Would you...?

Response of whites

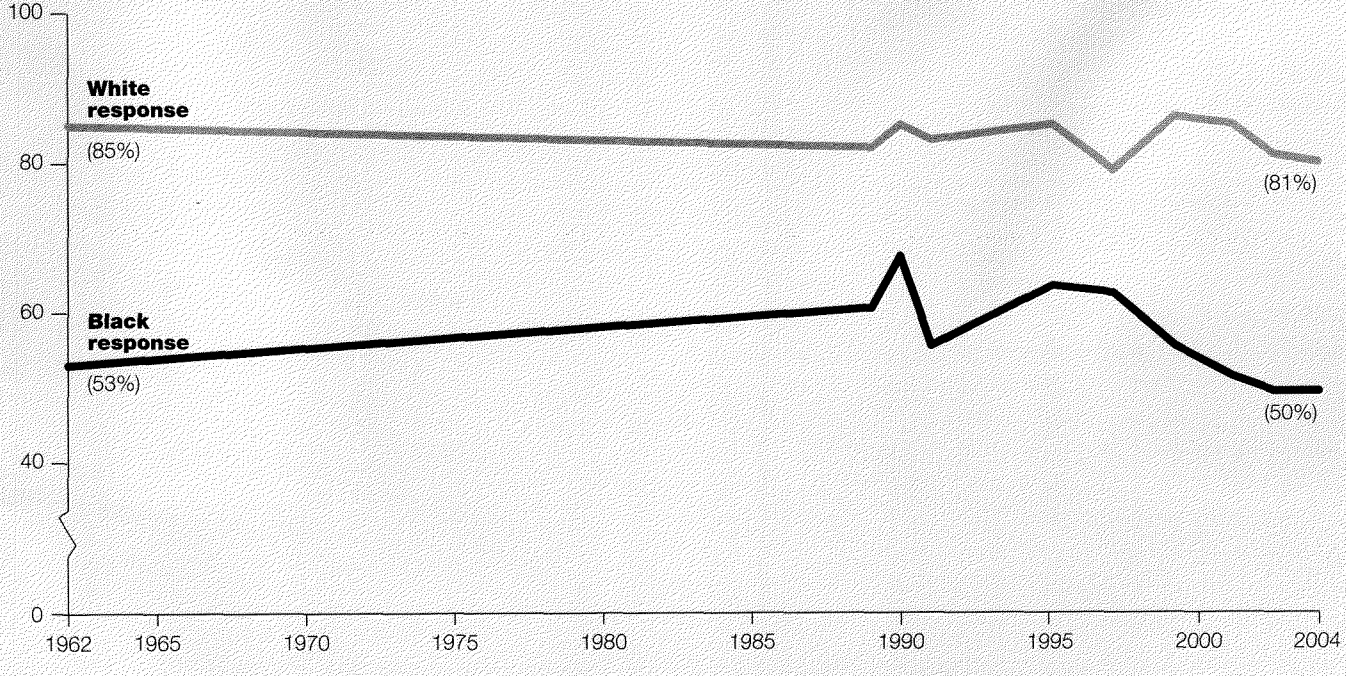
Object to having my children attend a school where the majority of pupils are Negroes



Source: The Gallup Organization, 1954.

Question: In general, do you think...?

Black children have as good a chance as white children in my community to get a good education



Source: The Gallup Organization, latest that of 2003.

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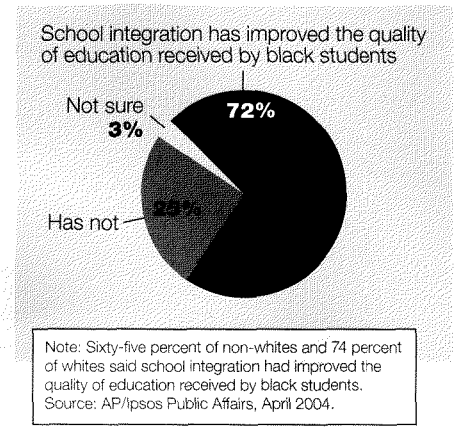
Brown (continued)

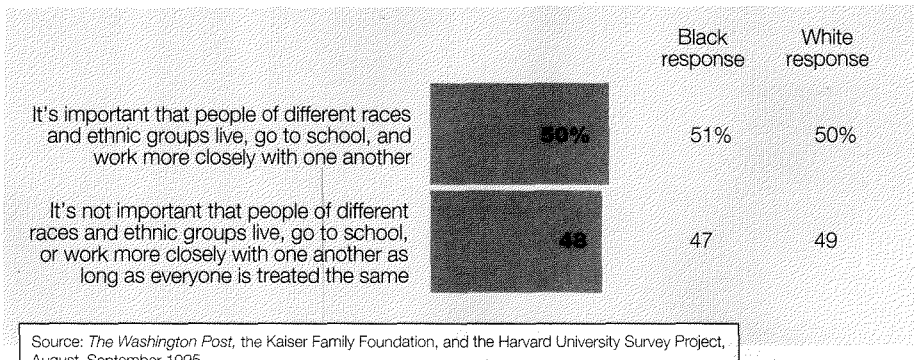
People still prefer sending children to local schools rather than busing them to schools outside their communities to create more integration. At the same time, people like the idea of sending their children to schools with a mixture of people from different races and ethnic groups. Overwhelming majorities of black and white parents today want to put more emphasis on academic standards and achievements than on racial diversity and integration.

Question: Do you think...?



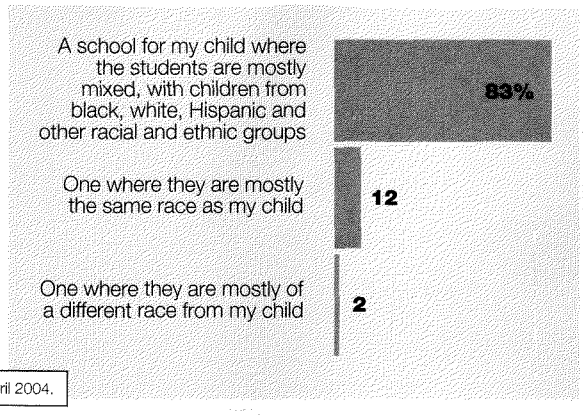
Note: Sixty-five percent of non-whites and 74 percent of whites said school integration had improved the quality of education received by black students.
Source: AP/Ipsos Public Affairs, April 2004.

Question: Which statement comes closer to the way you feel?



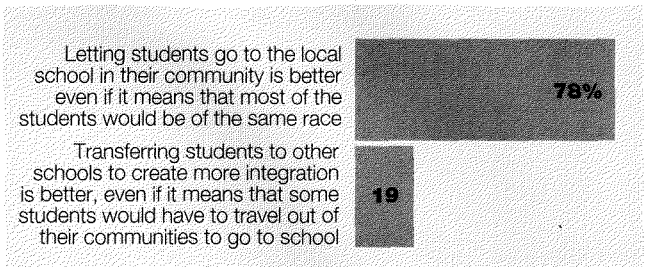
Source: *The Washington Post*, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Harvard University Survey Project, August–September 1995.

Question: Whether you have a child in school right now or not, which type of school do you prefer...?



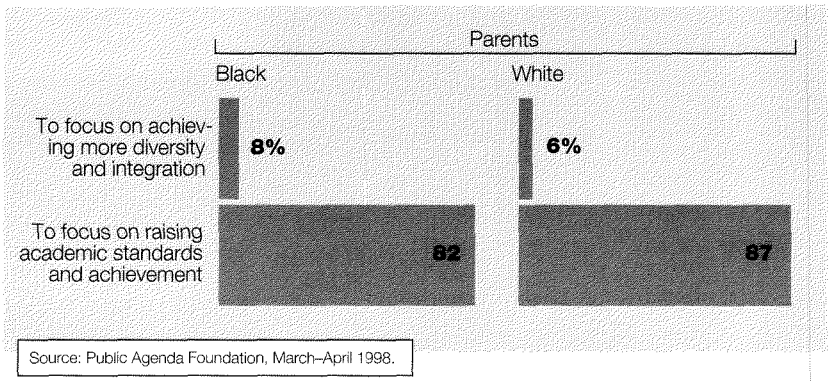
Source: AP/Ipsos Public Affairs, April 2004.

Question: In your view...



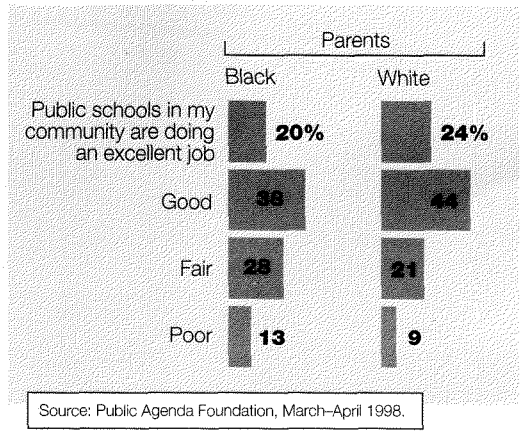
Note: Fifty-eight percent of non-whites said letting students go to their local school was better and 36 percent said transferring them was better.

Question: What should be a bigger priority for your own children's schools?



Source: Public Agenda Foundation, March–April 1998.

Question: Overall...



Source: Public Agenda Foundation, March–April 1998.

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the Mail

I had just been reading *Capital Press*, a Northwest newspaper covering agricultural business, before picking up the June issue and finding the article by Douglas Irwin, "Does International Trade Kill Good American Jobs?" I had never connected the problems that fruit and vegetable growers were facing here with that of other low paying jobs until I read his article. We apple and asparagus growers are another industry that uses low-pay, unskilled labor, and we have seen our markets decimated by imports from China, South America, and New Zealand.

Blake Hurst also pointed out in "The Free-Trade Movement's Achilles Heel" that what has sent growers from our country to South America is, in part, the cost of land here. A neighbor of mine who had been farming 1,000 acres with his own carrot-packing line sold it and moved his operation to Brazil. We all thought that it was because of lower labor costs there, but Mr. Hurst explained that the major differential is the cost of land, which is inflated in part by farm subsidies.

I might have been saddened for the future of agriculture in the United States by what I read, but I was glad to at least see it explained in a publication with as broad a readership as *TAE*.

Jan Dorman
Mesa, Washington

As a business writer and college instructor I'm not quite as blithe as Karl Zinsmeister (BIRD'S EYE, June) about the long-term risks (and possible unintended consequences) of globalization. But his column is the most coherent riposte I've yet seen against the gloom-and-doom crowd.

I especially liked the "can't have it both ways" paradox he spells out on page seven. It's as succinct a statement as I've ever seen describing the corner into which critics of capitalism have painted themselves on the question of how international trade affects the Third World.

Steve Salerno
Macungie, Pennsylvania

Karl Zinsmeister's BIRD'S EYE is right on the mark. It sometimes disturbs me that the Left, even after the debacle of world communism and the lead-pipe cinch proof of the unworkability of socialist economic and political policy, simply won't give up the ghost. Worse, some citizens refuse to accept the reality that there is no utopia. Perhaps the saying, "there are none so blind as those who will not see" is true here.

Alan Dowd's "9/11 Hypocrisy" (SCAN, June) is a story of truths "twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools," to quote Rudyard Kipling. To my mind, Richard Clarke is a knave, and he may, in the end, be a fool as well.

Joseph Murray
Round Rock, Texas

Chris Weinkopf's "Different Renegades, Different Media Portraits" (BEAT THE PRESS, April/May) rightly condemns the double standard of the news media regarding the mayor of San Francisco and the chief justice of Alabama.

Whether the mayor is accurately called a "renegade" I am not here to dispute. Certainly he is a scofflaw. But I can't see where Alabama's Roy Moore is either renegade or scofflaw. In fact it is his fellow judges who are literally "renegades," for they all took an oath to defend the Constitution, and by inverting the meaning of the first ten words of the First Amendment, they reneged on that oath.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion...." Don't these words mean that Congress shall neither establish a religion nor obstruct one? For over 100 years, those words protected the expression of a belief in God and the display of the Ten Commandments in public settings.

If the nine justices of the U.S. Supreme Court say that, henceforth, white shall be black, that doesn't make it so.

Jim Ware
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Jonathan Kallmer's critique of "Europe's Constitution Confusion" (March) touches on but skirts an important flaw in Brussel's efforts. Individual ingenuity is by far the best provider and problem solver we've got. All government does is get in the way. The E.U.'s draft constitution indicates that that is all the proposed constitution will do. Margaret Thatcher predicted the failure of the E.U.'s grandiose plans in her book, *Statecraft*, when she pointed out the unwillingness of the member nations' peoples to give up their own ways of doing things.

Toby Elster
Wichita, Kansas

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send e-mail to TAE@aei.org. Or write "The Mail," *The American Enterprise*, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax (202) 862-5867. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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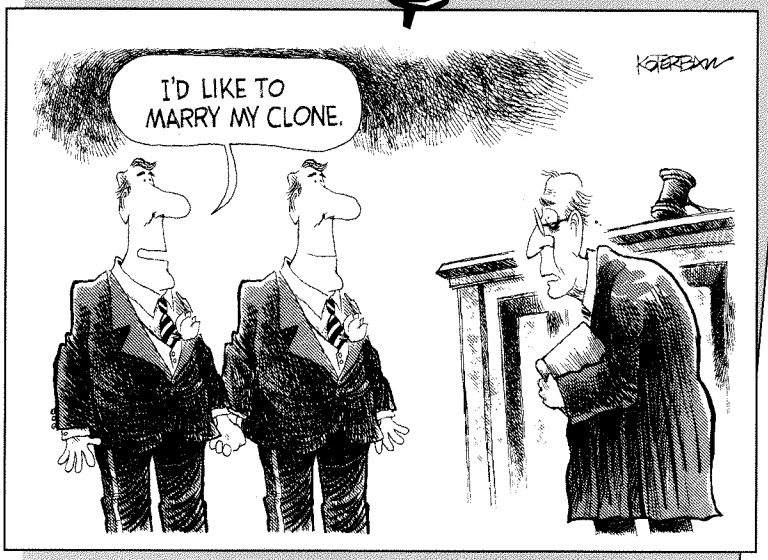
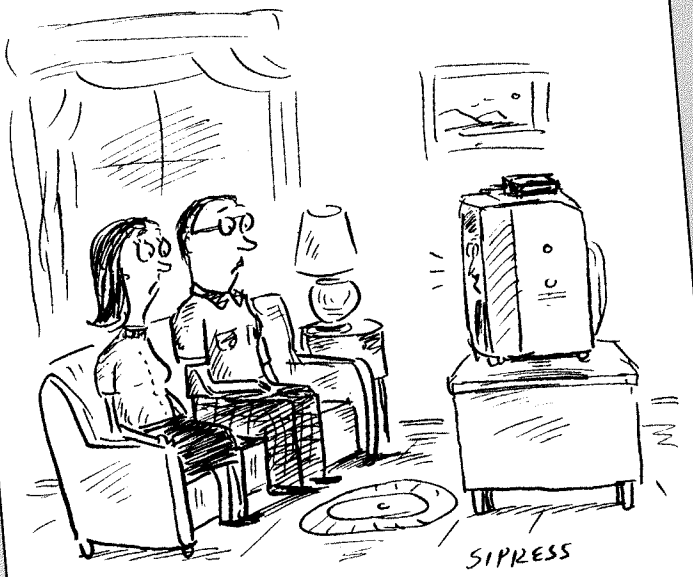


"I've got a beautiful wife, three wonderful children, and a great job, but I'm not happy with my current long-distance provider."



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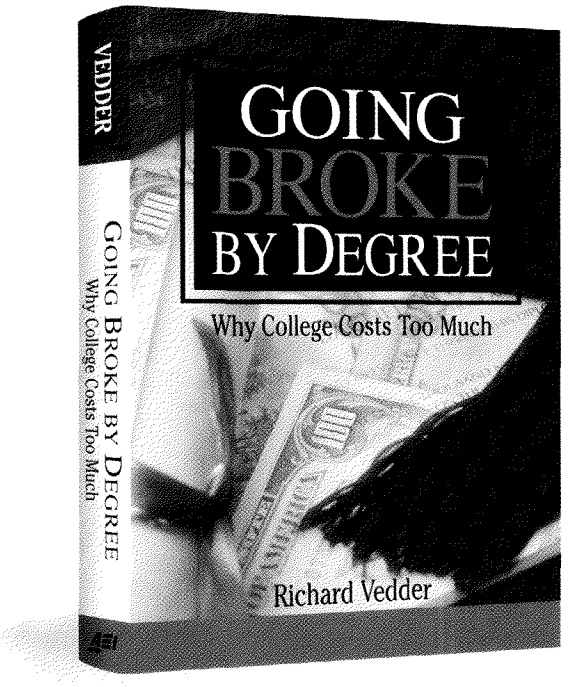

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—**Mark Sanford,** governor of South Carolina

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—**Chester E. Finn Jr.,** senior fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and president, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

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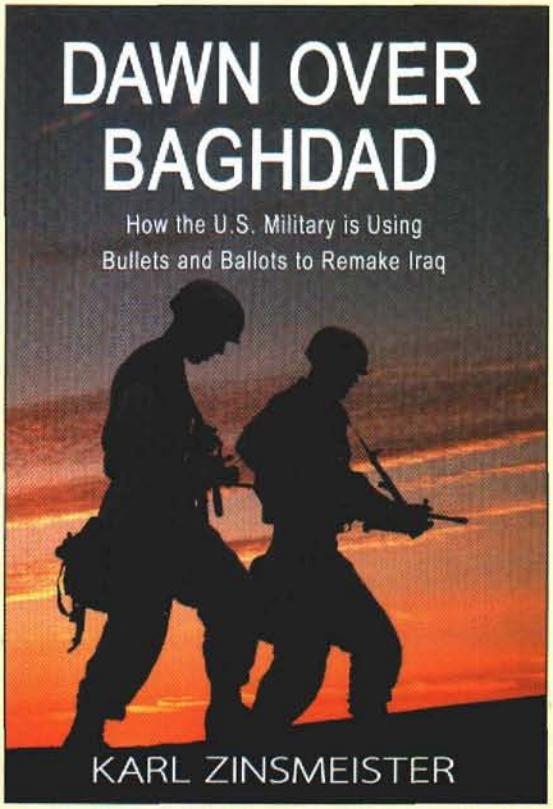

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